

VICTORIOUS

Issue 2, 2014



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uncharted
waters

The tales that
treasures can tell

The tales that treasures can tell



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Clarification: The article 'From ideas to action' in the previous issue incorrectly stated three projects were inventions by students enrolled in the MATE course when only one originated from MATE students' research. A corrected version of the article is available at www.victoria.ac.nz/news/victorious

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Gifting

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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

I have spent the past six months talking to many alumni and friends about Victoria's future direction to help decide the areas and actions that will define us both locally and globally. Your contributions to the development of our strategic plan have been vital and I very much appreciate the affinity you feel for your alma mater and the perspective you bring as potential employers, partners and supporters.

Thanks to your feedback and the contributions we have received from our Council staff, students, and communities, Victoria has developed an ambitious strategic agenda for the future. This will be the subject of future issues of *Victorious* but, by way of introduction, I have set out below some of the central features.

Our vision is for Victoria University to be a world-leading capital city university and one of the great global-civic universities.

Importantly, there are a number of concepts that underpin this vision. One is the concept of a capital city university—a notion that for Victoria flows naturally from our engagement with Wellington. We will be a capital city university that lives and breathes its capital city location.

A second and closely related concept is the idea of a civic university—a university that values close involvement with the cultural and economic life of its city and region. This is the mandate upon which the University was founded 117 years ago and it remains as important today as at our inception.

However, in the 21st century, we now must view civic engagement in a global context. To thrive, local communities must have access to internationally competitive academic excellence from their universities. In our case, Victoria is privileged to draw upon the national thinking and global mindedness of our capital city. As a result, we are in an ideal position to revitalise and redefine the civic university tradition as the 'global-civic university'. In so doing, the University highlights its commitment to civil society and global citizenship, declares its determination to contribute to the resolution of global as well as local challenges, and affirms its intent to graduate critically informed, globally confident, civic-minded students.

This international perspective reinforces rather than diminishes Victoria's commitment to its locality—Wellington, New Zealand and the wider Asia-Pacific region. This is the area of the world that sustains the University and its staff and students, and that increasingly defines its institutional identity and future.

Having settled on a vision of Victoria as a world-leading capital city university and one of the great global-civic universities there is now the 'small matter' of achieving this vision. Clearly, it will take more than just aspiration to get there. We will need well-thought-out strategies and shared ownership of this vision with our communities of interest. That means deepening our engagement with alumni and friends, employers and partners, the public sector and the diplomatic and business communities—to name just a few.

No matter where you are within this community, I encourage you to keep in contact with us. We value your advice, support, advocacy and perspectives.

To find out more, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/strategic-plan

Professor Grant Guilford
Vice-Chancellor

Soaking it up

What sea sponges may lack in charisma they make up for in resilience.

A long-term research programme at Victoria indicates that these diverse organisms, which range in size from less than a centimetre to giant sponges

“Globally, there is a realisation that sponges are likely to be here and doing well in a hundred years’ time.”

which are 1.8 metres wide and weigh 80 kilograms, are flourishing in parts of the world where coral is dying.

“Climate change and human impact are having a devastating effect on some marine species but, globally, there is a realisation that sponges are likely to be here and doing well in a hundred years’ time,”

says Dr James Bell, an associate professor in Marine Biology, who leads the group.

Some of the evidence to support that view comes from studies

being carried out by Victoria researchers at the reefs surrounding the islands of Hoga and Kaladupa in the Wakatobi Marine National Park in Sulawesi, Indonesia.

“It’s an ideal location for this work,” says PhD candidate Andy Biggerstaff, “because you have a comparatively healthy coral reef alongside one that appears to be undergoing transition from coral to sponge domination.”

At the latter reef, coral cover has dropped from 30 to less than 10 percent over a seven-year period, with sponge density increasing by 50 percent in the same period.

In addition to tracking the spread of the dominant sponge species on the reef, Andy is also looking at the impact human activities are having.

Communicating climate change

Climate change is one of the major issues of our time, but presenting the science behind it and what we can do about it is proving to be a challenge.

As far as important scientific issues go, climate change is a big one. So what are the difficulties with presenting the science of climate change to the public? And do mainstream media do an adequate job?

An upcoming book by Victoria media studies senior lecturer Dr Angi Buettner will examine these difficulties and whether mainstream media are portraying climate change science accurately.

"I've looked at how popular climate change denial has become—it gets more attention than proper science. Unfortunately, climate change denial makes a 'good story', which is what drives most media."

Angi says while it's easy to bash the media for that, the issues are complex. "Climate change deniers have a strong agenda, and are often better at manipulating the media than scientists, policy makers and environmental activists are; plus they often have the support of powerful lobby groups."

She says her findings so far are worrying. "There's a huge gap between what scientists have learned and what's actually out there in the public sphere. Good science, like the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report, tends not to make it to the public arena, whereas things like *The Day After Tomorrow*, a Hollywood blockbuster action movie about a climate disaster, does."

"The future of any environmental issue depends on our understanding of it, and that is largely driven by media representation—how it's shown and to whom. Scientists haven't really gotten across yet why climate change matters for you and me right now, because it's mostly negative information that tends to overwhelm people and they opt out."

Angi hopes her book might help change the status quo. "There's a lot of good work being done by scientists, but the future of the environment depends on whether we can communicate it effectively."

"Being close to a village of 2,000 people and recent clearing of mangroves has put a lot of sediment in the water, affecting the amount of light. It seems the sponges on the reef can rapidly adapt to survive in these low light conditions whereas corals struggle."

Victoria has one of the largest sponge ecology groups in the world and is involved in research in a number of other locations, including the United Kingdom, the Central and South Pacific, Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand.

At Victoria's Coastal Ecology Lab in Wellington, Master's student Tracey Bates is looking at how sponges in temperate waters will respond to ocean acidification and rising temperatures.

"We know virtually nothing about what will happen to sponges in New Zealand waters as the climate and the ocean both change, despite the fact that wherever you find underwater rock you find lots of

sponges," says Tracey.

Early findings from her work confirm what other research by the group is also showing—that sponges are resilient and able to adapt to changing conditions.

James says sponges are among the simplest of all organisms—most are attached to a reef, sucking in water through their pores, filtering out tiny particles of food and then pumping the water out again.

"Reefs that are dominated by sponges may not be as productive as coral reefs as a source of food for people because they won't support the same number of species. But, given the fact that they seem to thrive in conditions expected of marine environments in the future, it's vital that we understand more about them."

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Navigating uncharted waters

Victoria University's Pacific Studies programme has notched up a growing number of firsts.

In 2000, Victoria was the first university in the world to establish an undergraduate major in Pacific Studies.

The very first lecturer to come on board was Dr Teresia Teaiwa.

Fourteen years later, Teresia, now a senior lecturer, is the first Pasifika woman to receive an Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence award, worth

Islands is so huge and diverse, the pedagogical tasks so complex, that the notion of a single all-knowing teacher delivering knowledge from the front of the classroom is ludicrous.

"My commitment to nurturing an environment of excellence in teaching and learning comes from a sense of profound responsibility."

Dr April Henderson, a colleague, says that Teresia constantly strives to find the best way to teach Pacific Studies.

been reading. "Through Akamai, students start to understand art and performance not just as artefacts of cultural heritage, but as crucial elements of the intellectual heritage of the Pacific," she says.

Another initiative has been to make reading an assessable activity for all the programme's undergraduates.

"We have observed that Pasifika students are not as comfortable with reading as other students and, indeed, research has shown that many struggle with academic texts. Making reading part of the assessment process has got the students more engaged—and what was like mass dentistry in tutorials to extract responses from students about what they've read has led to more interactive classes.

"It's been encouraging to see how the culture of classrooms has changed. Students don't have to fail—how we design courses and what we assess will enhance learning."

Ultimately, Teresia hopes her students will embrace her view of learning about the Pacific.

"Rather than striving to be experts, I want my students in Pacific Studies to see themselves as experts-in-the-making—forever learning and valuing the journey as much as the destination of achieving their qualifications."

"My commitment to nurturing an environment of excellence in teaching and learning comes from a sense of profound responsibility."

\$20,000, for sustained excellence.

At the awards ceremony, Teresia was praised for her teaching approach that "challenges not only a European philosophy around learning and teaching, but also Pasifika peoples' confidence in their ways of knowing and achieving".

It hasn't always been plain sailing. Tasked with developing content and curriculum for a suite of courses when she took up her role at Victoria, Teresia says she felt like she was heading into uncharted waters. "With its over 1,200 indigenous languages—one-fifth of the world's linguistic diversity—the region commonly known as the Pacific

"Her integration of research, teaching and publication about teaching is one of the aspects that sets Teresia apart from many of her peers in our field. Her work has influenced the design of other Pacific Studies programmes and the training of their students."

The majority of students enrolled in Victoria's Pacific Studies programme are Pasifika, and Teresia has revised some of her teaching practices and assessments to facilitate their learning.

One of her unique approaches is 'Akamai' for 100-level students, in which students have the option of presenting a creative interpretation of what they have

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Improving government accountability

A commitment to making the New Zealand Government more open, accountable and responsive to its citizens is driving the contribution of two academics from Victoria's School of Government to the international Open Government Partnership (OGP).

Professor Miriam Lips and Dr Michael Macaulay have had significant input into OGP, a global initiative involving 64 nations working together to develop and implement ambitious open government reforms.

Miriam and Michael have contributed to a number of speaking events on the subject, both nationally and

internationally, and have provided advice on New Zealand's draft OGP action plan.

“Our role has been to use our knowledge and expertise to help initiate debate, inform the public and encourage broad consultation on good governance practices,” says Michael.

The OGP aims to improve public services and integrity, effectively manage resources to create safer communities and increase corporate responsibility.

www.opengovpartnership.org



THE VALUE OF THE MĀORI LANGUAGE

Exploring the future of the reo

The contemporary and future state of te reo Māori is the focus of a new book, *The Value of The Māori Language: Te Hua o te Reo Māori*.

The book is a product of Te Kura Roa, a research programme co-led by Victoria and Otago Universities. The programme quickly identified that Māori language literature and research has waned since the language received official status in 1987, says Professor Rawinia Higgins, head of school at Te Kawa a Māui and one of the book's editors.

Key commentators on Māori language revitalisation contributed chapters, including five current (and one former) Victoria University staff members and nine Victoria alumni.

With chapters in Māori and English, the book explores recent actions taken to restore the Māori language and challenges ideas about where language revitalisation must head to ensure the language is normalised in our society.

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Out of its shell

Extremely rare footage of a tuatara hatching was captured on film at Victoria in July. Last to hatch, the egg was one of 23 being incubated in captivity this year as part of a joint initiative that has helped to save a threatened population of tuatara from extinction.

Using a low-cost microcomputer and infrared camera, Warren Butcher from Victoria's Image Services team filmed seven hours of footage and then compressed it into a short video clip.

Since the early 1990s, Victoria University, the Department of Conservation and local Mana Whenua

Ngati Manuhiri have run an intensive conservation recovery plan for tuatara on Hauturu ō Toi/Little Barrier Island, partly-funded by the Hauturu Supporters Trust and Auckland Zoo.

Hauturu ō Toi is a nature reserve located 80 kilometres north-east of Auckland, now home to around 300 tuatara, 255 of which have been incubated at Victoria University. The star hatchling will be released there in a few years' time.

Watch the video of the tuatara hatching here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ar4hG8b534>



Collaborating for conservation

Whether it's working out why thieving robins can count their food stash or analysing kiwis' night-time calls, both Victoria University and Wellington's Zealandia wildlife sanctuary are reaping rewards from their longstanding partnership.

Professor Charles Daugherty, Victoria's Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Sustainability), is a current trustee for Zealandia, located in the central Wellington suburb of Karori. He says the link between the two institutions goes back to the sanctuary's early days.

"The concept was first proposed in 1992 by a group of ecologically-minded locals. Botanist Kath Dickinson and biologist Don Drake, both former Victoria staff, were involved at that foundation stage. When the Karori Sanctuary Trust was formed in 1995 it included Professor John Wells, a former head of Biology and then Dean of Science at Victoria. The late Professor Sir Paul Callaghan was a trustee. And Nicky Nelson from the School of Biological Sciences is the Victoria representative on the Guardians of the Sanctuary, an oversight group."

Since its inception, Zealandia has been the focus of dozens of postgraduate research projects. "These studies have helped Zealandia make important decisions about things like breeding, translocation of species or how to remove

non-native plants in a way that doesn't open the land up to an invasion by weeds," says Charles.

One milestone has been Victoria's School of Biological Sciences overseeing the translocation of tuatara to Zealandia, marking the return of the species to the mainland after at least 100 years' absence. "It's been a huge success," says Charles. "You can go there every day and see a tuatara."

Dr Kevin Burns, the deputy head of Victoria's School of Biological Sciences, who teaches two university courses at the sanctuary, can often be found taking classes on field trips through Zealandia's unique forest.

"Zealandia is absolutely fantastic," he says. "It is one of the largest assemblages of New Zealand's surviving native bird species, and is only a stone's throw from campus."

"A big part of my work is investigating animal minds. We found out that robins could count and we know it's because they're stealing food and want to get the biggest stash—but we could only find that out by coming to Zealandia and studying them at close range."

"Scientists usually spend enormous amounts of time preparing to go to remote locations to do this sort of work, whereas we can just roll out of the Kelburn campus and it's right there for us."

Victoria and Zealandia worked together in 2006 to get a grant from the Ministry of Education which was used to establish a Master's degree in ecological restoration. To date, 31 students have graduated from the programme.

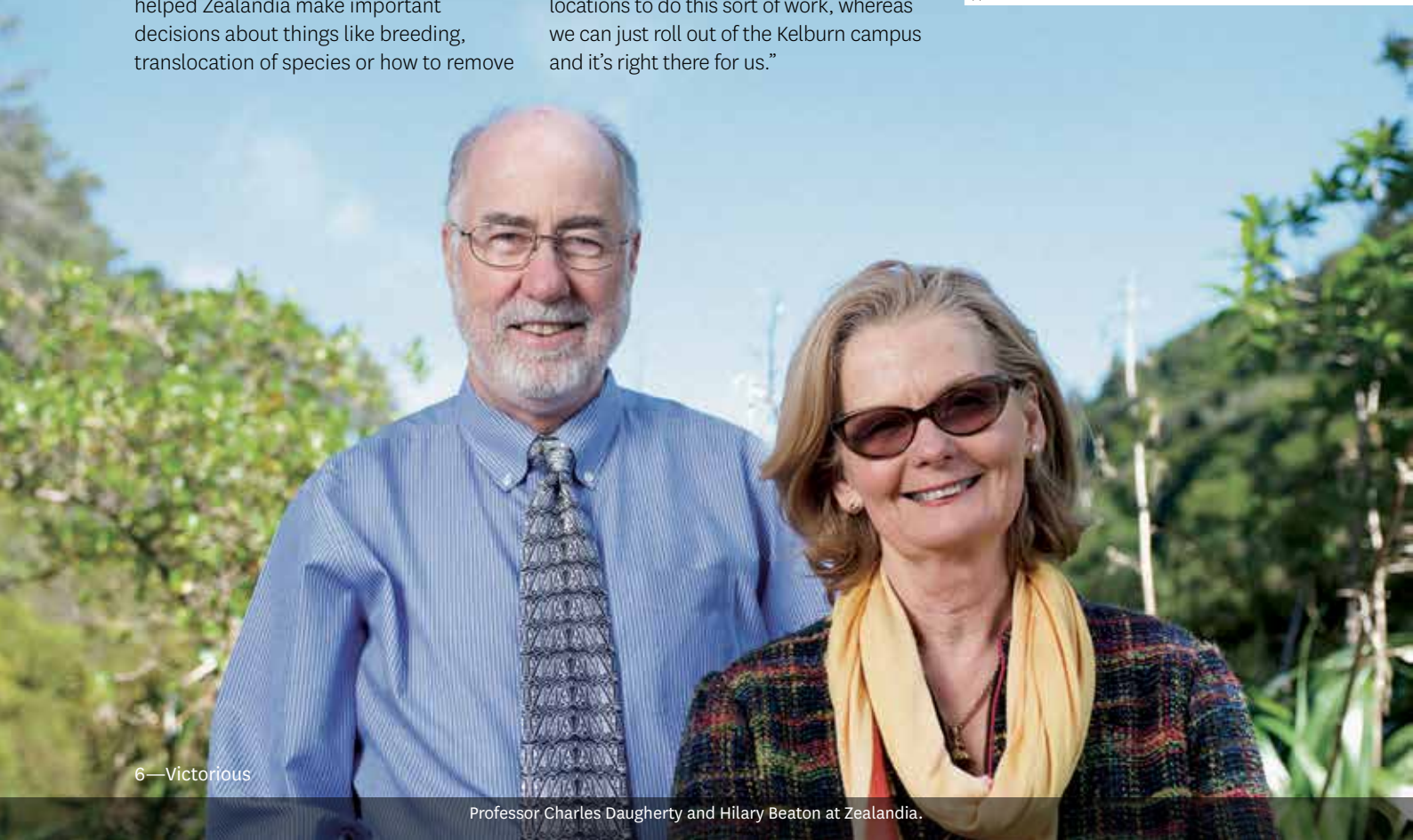
In 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations was signed to foster greater research collaboration.

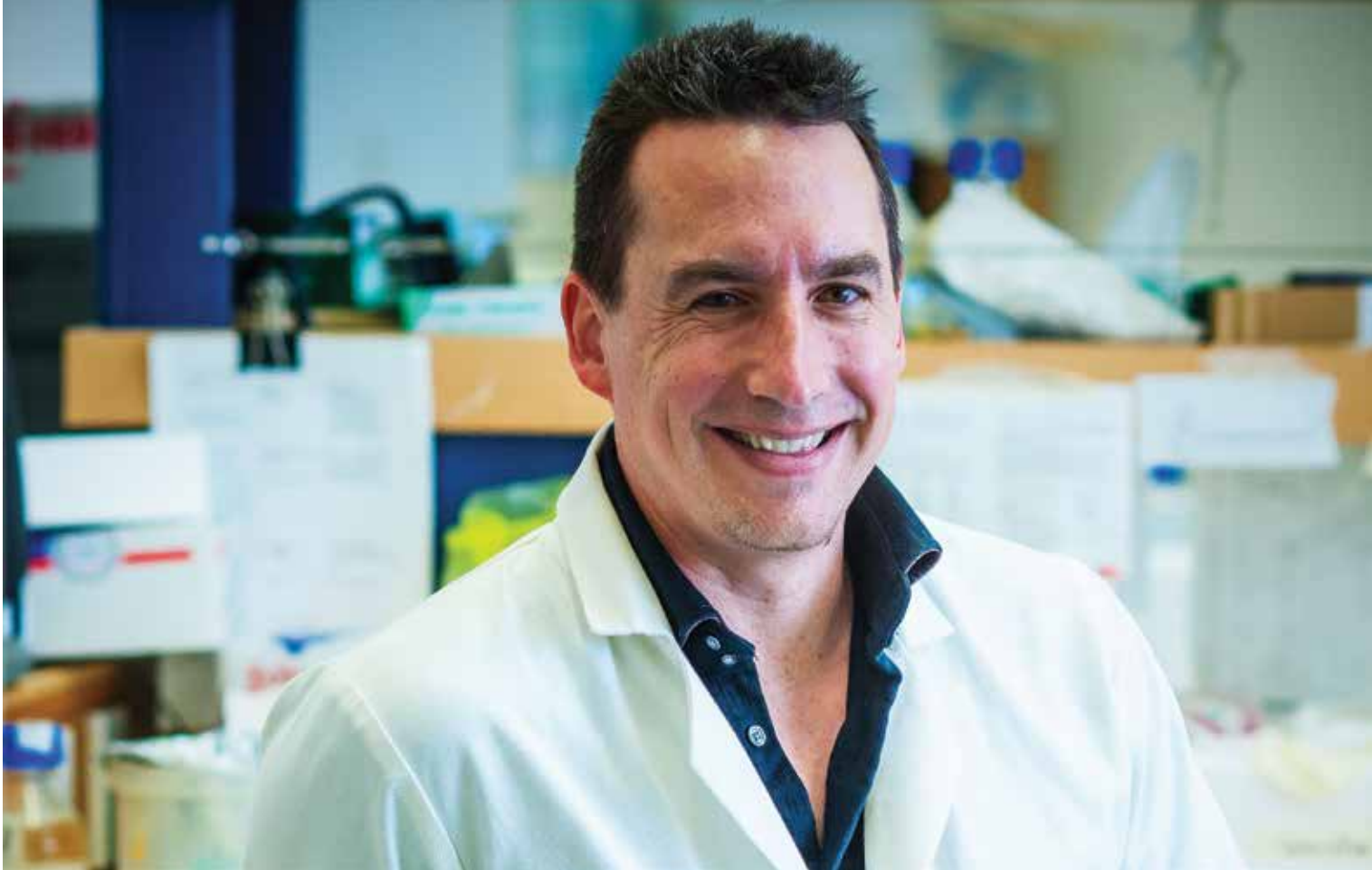
Zealandia's chief executive Hilary Beaton says the sanctuary's longstanding relationship with Victoria is a valuable one. "Our joint influence and expertise can come together for the greater good of our pursuit of restoration conservation."

Charles agrees. "Zealandia is important for Wellington and for New Zealand. It's an ecological restoration project in the middle of the city. And for more than a decade, Wellingtonians have enjoyed the fruits of that, through the growing presence of tui, kaka, kereru and other native species in our city."

"Our plan is to continue to grow our relationship with Zealandia into more of a formal partnership so we can do more together."

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Revolutionary cancer treatment

A new form of cancer therapy nine years in the making has potential to be the ‘miracle cure’ the world has been waiting for, according to Dr David Ackerley.

Work led by David, director of Victoria’s Biotechnology programme and an associate professor in the School of Biological Sciences, has underpinned the development of a new form of chemotherapy that exclusively affects cancer cells. With this more targeted method, cancer patients should experience fewer side effects.

To achieve their goal, David and his team at Victoria and Auckland Universities have found a way to engineer genes that

can transform a relatively safe, non-toxic compound into a drug that is highly toxic to cancer cells.

These genes can be delivered to cancer cells, using viruses or bacteria that are able to replicate in tumours. The patients are then treated with the compound David’s team has developed. Because the treatment is non-toxic to healthy cells, the compound can be administered to patients at much higher doses than regular chemotherapy drugs.

Alongside researchers in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the team is moving towards clinical trials which, David says, should occur within

the next two years. “We know our therapy works at a laboratory level, but we’re going to have to tick a lot of boxes to show that it will be safe for patients and more effective than current chemotherapy treatments.”

David says the field of cancer gene therapy has previously suffered because there’s been no way to non-invasively confirm that a virus is delivered only to the tumour.

“What’s unique about our study is that the genes we work with can also trigger radioactive molecules, called positron emission tomography [PET] imaging probes. This may allow a clinician to put a patient in a full body PET scanner to safely detect exactly where in the body the gene has been delivered.”

The common theme of David’s different research areas is mimicking natural evolutionary processes to improve enzyme activities. One of his PhD students, Alistair Brown, who is part of the University’s 2014 Know Your Mind recruitment campaign, is using this process for the discovery of new antibiotics and to solve other health problems.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WysOBgE1zi0

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Solving problems with bacteria

In his second year of study, Alistair Brown decided to downsize from whales to bacteria, changing his major from Marine Science to Cell and Molecular Bioscience. Five years on, Alistair is working towards a PhD in Biotechnology under the supervision of Dr David Ackerley.

The focus of his PhD research is an enzyme produced by a bacterial species that makes a blue pigment. Initially, he used the enzyme to try to

identify new antibiotics from nature. He is now using it to measure glutamine levels in complex biological mixtures such as blood or cell culture medium, for medical or industrial applications.

His research is supported by Victoria University’s commercialisation office, Viclink, something Alistair says has opened doors for him.

Find out more about Alistair at victoria.ac.nz/alistair

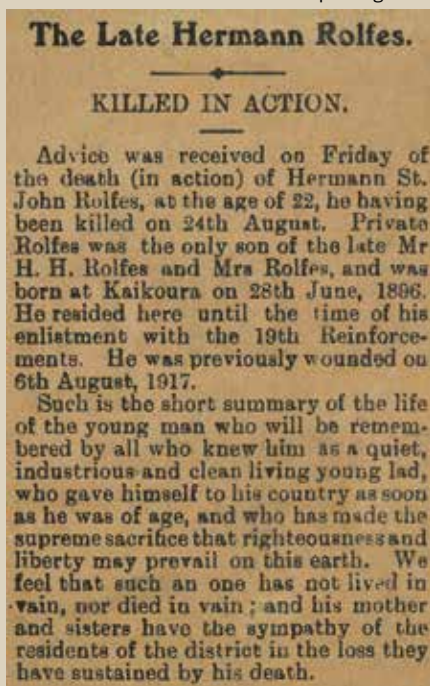
The tales that treasures can tell

What does a history of our World War I experience look like if we rely less on the surviving documents, and more on the objects that remain?



Portrait of Hermann Rolfes, c. 1914

Credit: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa



Newspaper clipping of obituary of Hermann Rolfes, likely published in the *Kaikoura Star*, 1918
Credit: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa



Mrs Rolfes' change purse, c. 1920

Credit: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

That's the question asked in a new book, *Holding on to Home: New Zealand Stories and Objects of the First World War*, co-authored by Victoria historian Kate Hunter, an associate professor at the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, and Kirstie Ross, a fellow historian and the curator of Modern New Zealand at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

The book features about 300 objects sourced from 28 collections held around New Zealand, including regional museums.

"One of my favourites is a collection of scarab beetles from Gallipoli," says Kate. "Two clearly bored soldiers started gathering these beetles, packaging them up and sending them home. There are 20 in a tray at Te Papa. It's so quirky, it's fantastic."

A more poignant favourite of Kate's is a jacket that had belonged to soldier William Phillipps.

"The uniform jacket had been in museum storage for 60 years. We opened one of the pockets and found a bloodied bandage. The other pocket was full of sand. William had worked at a hospital in Egypt. It was like one of those wormholes back in time—the most eerie experience I've ever had as a historian."

Kate says by focusing on objects alongside documents, a very different history of the war emerges.

"The objects tell us about the importance of reminders or tokens during the war. The everyday, human stories behind these things remind us how close people stayed to each other during the war, despite the distance.

"Men went into camp with nothing except a pair of boots and a shaving kit, and the army provided everything else. But a friend might also give him a watch, a parent might give him a pocket bible—little things you could carry, which kept a man connected to his life at home."

Kate says it wasn't just the soldiers affected by the war—their families were also deeply wounded.

"Te Papa has a collection of soldier Hermann Rolfes' things—when he was killed his mother received a calico bag with his army possessions, things like buttons and his pay book. But then there's the items his mother had—she carried his photo in a tiny purse in her bag for the rest of her life. She'd also clipped his obituary from the newspaper, just a tiny square of newsprint. You put them all together and you get this tragic picture of a woman whose son was killed and how that must have broken her. It's the not letting go that really got me."

"When we focus all the time on the men serving overseas it's easy to forget they are members of families. What Kirstie and I wanted to do with this book was to reduce the separation between civilians and soldiers in traditional histories of the war."

The book took Kate and Kirstie three years to write, and is the first part of Te Papa's Conflict and Identity programme, which runs until 2019. It was supported by Te Papa Press, Friends of Te Papa and Victoria's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

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Peter Buck, and other World War I, Pioneer Battalion soldiers, digging a trench in Malta. Credit: New Zealand Free Lance collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Reference PAColl-7171-57

Different perspectives on World War I

One hundred years on from World War I, New Zealanders are still finding new ways to remember it.

How We Remember: New Zealanders and the First World War, a collection of 20 essays by a range of prominent New Zealanders, tells stories of the Great War from new, and sometimes deeply personal, perspectives.

“We were looking for the best people to write, and it just so happened many have links to the University.”

Published by Victoria University Press, the book is edited by Professor Harry Ricketts and Dr Charles Ferrall, both from Victoria’s English department.

Charles says it’s a happy coincidence that more than half the contributors also have Victoria connections. “We were looking for the best people to write, and it just so happened many have links to the University.”

Each writer offers a different perspective on remembering World War I, says Harry.

“The stories vary from personal accounts to academic examinations. It depends whether the author is Māori or Pākehā, whether they had ancestors who served or what their academic discipline

might be. The book’s title asks a question but also suggests how deeply and how much we remember the First World War, and indeed go on remembering it.”

One of the contributors is TV3’s John Campbell, a former student of Harry’s, who has written an imagined story of a real-life soldier, Cecil Carrington. “John went to a remote small town—

Awakino—where the war still presses its thumb,” says Harry. “He spotted Cecil’s name on a war memorial and tried to conceive what the experience must have been like for him and his family.”

Harry found writer Jane Hurley’s essay particularly touching. “It’s a tribute to her father Des, who had been employed at Victoria when he died. He had been writing about New Zealand’s prisoners of war in Turkey—those men who perhaps made it through Gallipoli but didn’t survive as prisoners.”

Charles has also contributed an academic essay to the book. “Maurice Shadbolt’s play, *Once on Chunuk Bair*,

which was turned into a film, and his book, *Voices of Gallipoli*, have contributed hugely to how the First World War is remembered in New Zealand—but those works have mythologised the campaign. I’ve sought to correct those inaccuracies, as I don’t feel they should influence how we remember Gallipoli during the centenary.”

Charles says amid a plethora of World War I-related publications being released to mark the centenary, *How We Remember* offers a different viewpoint. “There’s an essay by David Grant on conscientious objectors; Paul Diamond writes about Charles Mackay, the mayor of Wanganui, persecuted on the home front for his presumed homosexuality; Anna Rogers’ essay is about nurses in the First World War; and John Horrocks raises questions about the process of memorialising and commemorating.

“We like to think this provides something of an alternative to the deluge of military history that’s coming out at the moment.”

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Make music, not war

A professor from Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music is on his way to creating an epic symphony of musical commemoration.

Revisiting battlegrounds and other important World War I sites, Professor John Psathas' project, *No Man's Land*, will bring together musicians from around the world to play an original piece of music honouring the sacrifice of individuals from many of the nations affected by the Great War.

It's the ordinary people who found themselves in an extraordinary situation that John particularly wishes to acknowledge.

"We are talking about an 18-year-old farmhand from rural New Zealand who ended up on the battlefield of the Somme—that's somebody we shouldn't forget."

Funding from the Lottery Grants Board and Victoria University will allow John to walk the battlefields of France, Belgium, Turkey, Greece, Poland and other key locations to film and record musicians performing the new work.

By respectfully acknowledging the suffering of so many, John wants the

project to be seen as an expression of hope, especially for countries currently in conflict.

"We should be able to look at any current global conflict and think that peace is possible.

"If you said to those fighting in 1914 that 100 years later representatives from all these countries would be reunited on the same piece of earth and make music together, they wouldn't have believed you."

Through music and imagery, John hopes to move beyond the 'us and them' mentality that resulted from the war. Success, he says, will come from being able to represent everyone equally.

"Most commemorative events are from a single perspective—we have a unique opportunity to create something beyond this."

The battlefield musical collaborations involving descendants of soldiers from opposing forces in the Great War will be fused into a unique 70-minute film, to be projected alongside musicians appearing

live on stage. Both live and virtual performers will become one epic global orchestra.

No Man's Land will debut in New Zealand in 2016 and then tour around the country. The film will also be presented in small New Zealand towns, as a springboard for encouraging community dialogue about each town's war-time history.

The visual aspect of the project aims to show that everyone experienced great suffering, sacrifice and loss.

"I think the way to comprehend, connect, understand and empathise is to have an emotional point of entry. That's the role music and imagery play, helping us move past barriers and filters so that we really feel something."

John and a small crew will be travelling to Europe and Turkey before the end of this year to scout locations for filming, which will take place in late 2015.

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On top of the world

Presenting to some of the most powerful people in the Commonwealth, making Swiss rolls for Prince Charles and talking about opera with the New Zealand High Commissioner were just a few of the things 20-year-old Katherine McIndoe did in July.

The third-year Music and Development Studies student, and winner of last year's Commonwealth Essay Competition, was one of 100 young people selected out of over 900 applicants from around the world to participate in 33Fifty, the Commonwealth Youth Leadership

Programme held in conjunction with the opening of the Commonwealth Games.

Katherine was one of 11 representatives shoulder tapped to stay on for an additional four days at the Commonwealth Games Business Conference in Glasgow. Her group then chose her to represent their collective point of view on a panel about youth leadership to an audience of more than 200 Commonwealth leaders and CEOs, as well as a live online audience—an experience she describes as “petrifying but exciting”.



Innovative teaching tool

New technology in the classroom is creating a more interactive and dynamic learning experience at Victoria.

Similar to the interactive game show, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, GoSoapBox allows lecturers to poll, quiz, gauge understanding of topics and facilitate discussions with students.

Students access GoSoapBox on their own devices via a website and enter a code provided by the lecturer.

The instantaneous feedback from

students helps a lecturer gauge whether they understand what is being discussed, and if they are able to use the skills that are being introduced.

GoSoapBox, developed by Chicago-based start-up company GoEducation, was piloted last year by a focus group of lecturers, students, learning support staff and representatives from Disability Services. An increasing number of staff are now using the technology in their teaching.

Nominations now open for 2015 Distinguished Alumni Awards

Victoria University's biannual Distinguished Alumni Awards celebrate our outstanding graduates and acknowledge their excellence, achievement and contribution to their profession, community or country. There is no limit to the nature of the achievement, and nominations are expected to span all professional, voluntary, public sector, cultural, sporting and social domains.

For nomination forms and full details of the process, visit

www.victoria.ac.nz/alumni

Nominations will close on Tuesday 20 January 2015, after Wellington Anniversary Day.

The awards dinner will be held on 17 June.

Our 2013 winners were Claudia Batten, John Campbell, Georgina te Heuheu, Brian Roche, Conrad Smith and Jeff Tallon.



Credit: Photography by Woolf.



Artist's impression of the exterior of the proposed new science building. Credit: Warren and Mahoney

Plans for expansion

New building plans for two of Victoria's campuses will ensure the University has the right environment to achieve its strategic goals.

Development plans are proceeding for a major new science building on Victoria's Kelburn campus, and the redevelopment of Rutherford House in central Wellington, where Victoria Business School is based.

The new building on the Kelburn campus will house teaching and research labs for biological science and general teaching facilities, while the Rutherford House construction will involve an extension to the existing building.

Chancellor Ian McKinnon said the projects, which will cost over \$100 million, represent a significant investment in further development of the University's facilities to support continuing growth.

"These construction projects are part of the University's commitment to providing a first-class student experience and maintaining Victoria's reputation as a leader in teaching and research," he says.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Grant Guilford adds, "The plans give an exciting glimpse into the future of Victoria and its place as New Zealand's globally ranked capital city university."



Artist's impression of the Rutherford House extension. Credit: Athfield Architects/One to One Hundred



Credit: Harry Cawood

A helping hand for our rarest kiwi

A Victoria student's work on the reintroduction of a critically endangered species of kiwi is helping ensure the iconic New Zealand bird will remain in our forests for generations to come.

Rachael Abbott has just completed her PhD research on the best ways to translocate the rowi, the rarest species of kiwi, which has a population of around only 400.

The rowi's breeding range is limited to the Ōkārito forest in South Westland, where stoats and rats threaten eggs and young chicks.

Rowi eggs are hatched by the Department of Conservation (DOC). The fledgling birds are then taken to predator-free Motuara Island in the Marlborough Sounds, where they remain until they reach a weight of at least one kilogram—big enough to run away from predators or fight them off.

Rachael's research looked specifically at the issues affecting survival of the young rowi after they are translocated back to Ōkārito forest from the island.

"After rowi translocations there's a period of about 90 days of increased

mortality while the birds adjust to their new environment," says Rachael. "DOC had been collecting a lot of data over the years, but hadn't analysed it.

"I examined patterns in the historic data and then ran experimental releases to test my survival theories. Among other things, the size of the release groups was incredibly important—birds released in small groups don't do nearly as well as ones in larger groups because of the benefits that come with increased sociality, such as sharing burrows and food resources."

DOC is awaiting Rachael's final recommendations that it will then look to incorporate into its practices.

Rachael started her research with a Master's, and is grateful for funding from Victoria's Centre for Biodiversity and Restoration Ecology and the Holdsworth Trust (through the Victoria University Foundation), both of which allowed her to expand her work into a PhD and travel to conferences in the United States and Europe.

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New path to leadership

Aspiring principals are being given on-the-job training as part of a new Master's programme at Victoria.

The unique Master of Secondary School Leadership (MSSL) programme, co-taught by the Faculty of Education and Victoria Business School, gives practical experience to help prepare those in senior roles at secondary schools for the next step in their career.

Head of Victoria's School of Education, Dr Kate Thornton, says the MSSL originated from an approach by a group of Auckland secondary school principals who felt they weren't receiving enough applications from high-calibre staff for senior leadership positions.

"The goal is to give experienced teachers with leadership responsibilities the skills and knowledge to lead large secondary schools in ways that lead to raised student achievement."

Combining the research and teaching strengths of the Faculty of Education and Victoria Business School with the expertise and input of experienced secondary principals, the programme is run in block courses during school holidays and weekends. Participants take part in four, five-day placements during term time and are mentored by an experienced school principal.

Although current MSSL student Dr Karen Dobric, deputy principal at Auckland's Papatoetoe High School, laughs off suggestions that her current principal should be worried about his job, she does hope to become a secondary school principal within the next five years.

"This programme has shown me that I can make a contribution at an upper level, and has given me a different type of confidence."

Dr Dobric spent a week at Waitakere College being mentored by its principal, Mark Shanahan, who also valued being part of the programme.

"It allowed me to reflect on what I do every day in my role, and to demonstrate what a principal really does," says Mark.

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Shalen Kumar and Omar Alsager holding the sensors they developed.

Detecting harmful molecules

A novel sensor that can detect environmental contaminants as miniscule as one pinch of salt in an Olympic-sized swimming pool has been developed by Victoria University researchers.

Work by PhD students Shalen Kumar and Omar Alsager has resulted in a tool that can quickly detect hormones, additives used in plastics, cocaine and other molecules.

Supervised by Professor Ken McNatty from the School of Biological Sciences and Dr Justin Hodgkiss from the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences, Shalen and Omar worked together to develop the test, which could hit the market within a couple of years.

The sensor is able to recognise a specific molecule and changes colour when a target is recognised.

Shalen and Omar's PhD research proved the perfect combination for the design of the sensors, which can show whether a sample is contaminated within just a few minutes.

"Our test works by mixing strands of DNA with gold nanoparticles, forming

a pink-coloured liquid," explains Omar, whose PhD was funded by King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, Saudi Arabia. "When the DNA recognises a targeted molecule it turns the liquid blue."

In theory, adds Shalen, whose study was funded by a Te Tipu Pūtaiao Fellowship, the DNA developed could have multiple applications. One application is detecting environmental levels of oestrogenic compounds in drinking water—molecules that can have adverse effects on human and animal reproductive cycles.

Currently, the only way to measure the amount of oestrogen in water is to send a sample to a lab for analysis, which is expensive and takes time to get results. "With our new sensors, those in the field, such as a regional council officer or water board inspector, could add a sample to the test vial and get a yes or no answer almost immediately," says Ken.

"It is crucial to be aware if there's oestrogen in the environment, especially as it is not uncommon for water in

many countries, including New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom, to be recycled. We have no idea how much oestrogenic material is in there."

Another concern is that the additives in everyday plastic items such as drink bottles, containers and rubbish bags, can accumulate over time and behave like oestrogen. However, measuring contamination from these additives is expensive. "We don't know yet what the safe level is for these additives over 30 years of exposure," says Ken.

The team will focus next on refining the sensitivity of the sensors and developing them to target other molecules.

There's also a possibility of starting a company, with the support of Viclink, Victoria's commercialisation company, says Ken. "It's a case of carving out the right niche and finding the right application. Because it's a generic technology, there is a range of areas we could explore."

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Doing business with India

Providing practical advice on doing business in India is the focus of new research by Dr Revti Raman, a senior lecturer in Victoria's School of Marketing and International Business.

"While New Zealand and India are both democratic systems with colonial backgrounds, the cultures, languages, regulations and justice systems of the two countries are significantly different," says Revti, who has received a grant of \$56,500 from the India New Zealand Education Council.

Revti is collaborating with Dr Balwinder Singh from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, on the 18-month joint research project. As well as academic papers, they plan to publish a small, non-academic book for practitioners.

"New Zealand's trade with India has doubled in the last five years, so it's an important emerging market. Success depends upon being able to understand differences between the two countries and then being able to manage them effectively."

The India New Zealand Education Council grants are administered by Victoria's New Zealand India Research Institute, headed by Professor Sekhar Bandyopadhyay. Funded by Education New Zealand, the Institute focuses on research on India, and is part of the NZ Inc India Strategy to support long-term trade and economic links with India.

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Prestigious legal appointment

Victoria's Dean of Law, Professor Tony Smith, has been appointed to a distinguished legal role at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

Tony will become the Arthur Goodhart Visiting Professor in Legal Science for the northern hemisphere academic year, beginning in September 2015. He will step down from his current roles at Victoria in March next year, after eight years in both positions, and will return to a professorial position at Victoria at the conclusion of his time at Cambridge University.

Victoria University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Grant Guilford, says that Tony's Cambridge appointment reflects the high regard in which he is held internationally.

"Tony has made an outstanding contribution to Victoria. Under his leadership, Victoria's Faculty of Law became the number one ranked law school in New Zealand for research quality [in the 2012 Performance-Based Research Fund evaluation] and has consistently gained outstanding placings in international rankings."

Shear determination

On the back of his Master's project 'going viral' online, recent School of Design graduate Earl Stewart found himself part of the team that has produced the world's first woollen running shoe.

The end result of Earl's research, the 3D printed, fully customised XYZ shoe, caught the attention of start-up company Three Over Seven.

"I love the brand's vision and believe in getting the world moving, so when an opportunity presented itself I decided to go all-in," he says. Earl joined the team in London, providing expertise

in the application of advanced digital manufacturing of footwear.

Three Over Seven's woollen sports shoe concept was awarded a place in a British business accelerator programme earlier this year. More recently, the team won the Virgin Media Business Three New Things competition, providing them with an opportunity to meet iconic entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson.

www.kickstarter.com/projects/3over7/the-wool-runners-no-socks-no-smell
www.cargocollective.com/earlstewart/XYZ-SHOE



Credit: Fraser Clements



Martha van Drunen at Pataka Art + Museum next to Peter Madden's artwork *The Unbuilt Realm of Indeterminapolis*.

Career kickstart

Students enrolled in Victoria's Museum and Heritage Studies programme gain a broad range of hands-on experience that is normally not encountered until they fly the academic nest.

Throughout the year, the programme offers its postgraduate students placements in organisations ranging from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand, to smaller regional museums, art galleries and archives. As a result, the students build up their CVs while also gaining an academic qualification.

"These aren't internships or work experience as such, and that's the key to their success—they are part of the course, with learning objectives," says programme director Dr Conal McCarthy. "We tailor each placement to suit both the institution and the student."

Current student Alice Meads enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Museum and Heritage Studies after completing a BA in History with a minor in Māori Studies, and is now doing a Master's degree. She says that placements are a great way to learn.

"Last year I did a placement with the History Group at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. I researched Māori World

War I memorials and wrote entries for the memorials register on New Zealand History (NZHistory.net.nz). As a history graduate, with a particular interest in New Zealand history, it was a really exciting opportunity.

"I've recently finished a placement with the Arrangement and Description Team at the National Library of New Zealand, which provided me with valuable hands-on experience working with heritage collections."

Recent graduate Martha van Drunen began the course with a Master's degree in Religious Studies. She says she arrived with a lot of theory in her head and the urge to do something practical.

Her final placement, which led to a permanent job as an exhibitions officer, was at Pataka Art + Museum. She started off by shadowing curators Mark Hutchins-Pond and Alice Masters in the lead-up to the Uku Rere exhibition that showcased contemporary Māori ceramic artists.

"One of the great things about working at a smaller institution is that you get

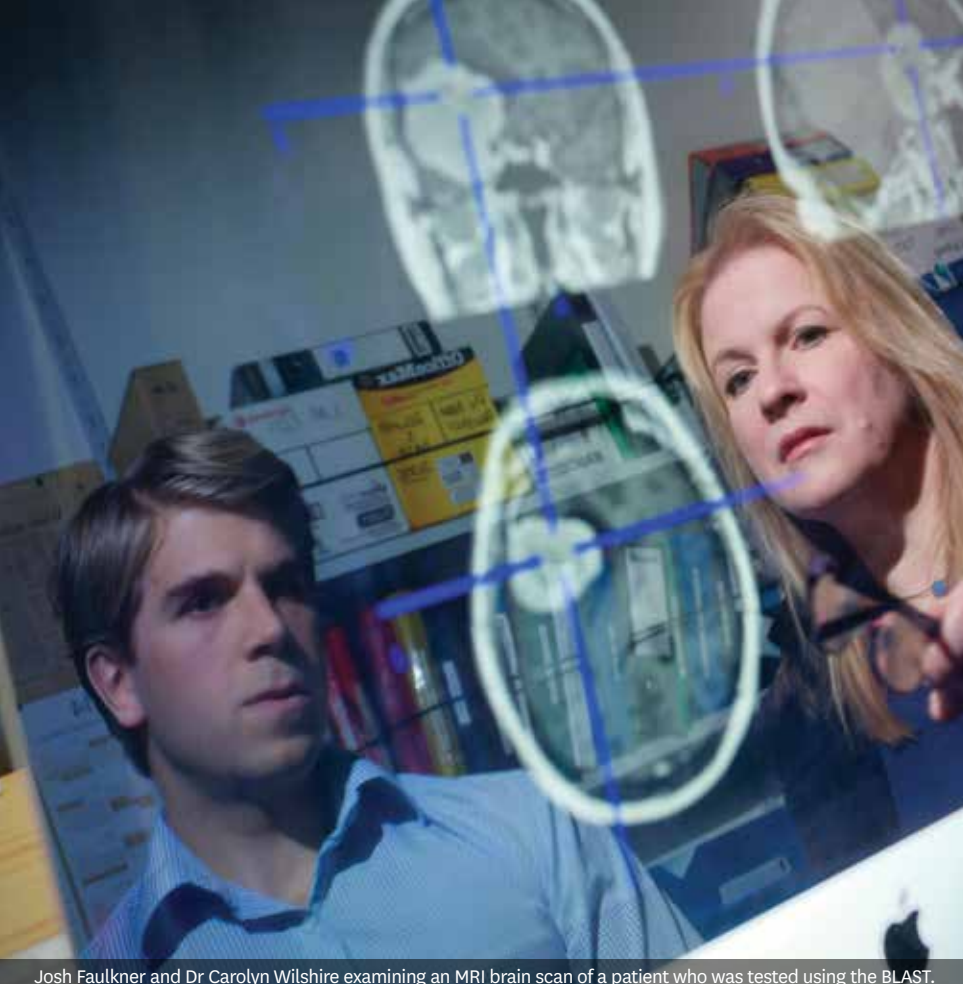
to do a bit of everything, so I ended up chipping in with the installation of seven different exhibitions, and helped with condition reporting, lighting, painting—even helping to proofread and edit the exhibition catalogues. I discovered that I really liked the physical aspect of the work and working with power tools!

"I feel very lucky to be where I am now. Unwrapping art works at the start of a new exhibition feels a bit like Christmas, except it happens every couple of weeks."

Placement manager Annie Mercer says each placement requires students to self-evaluate and give presentations on their experiences afterwards. At the end of the year, students receive feedback from a panel of professionals after submitting a mock job application and presenting their CV to the panel.

"Our message is clear from the beginning—your career starts now."

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Josh Faulkner and Dr Carolyn Wilshire examining an MRI brain scan of a patient who was tested using the BLAST.

Unlocking the brain's secrets

A simple language test could help medical professionals establish the impact of brain tumours more accurately than has been possible in the past.

Called the BLAST (Brief Language Assessment for Surgical Tumours), the test has been developed by PhD student Josh Faulkner and his supervisor, Dr Carolyn Wilshire, at Victoria's School of Psychology.

The BLAST is the first assessment to analyse language skills in brain tumour patients. A patient is tested before and after surgery, to determine the effect of a tumour on language and whether surgery has altered language function.

For the past three years, Josh has been working with 40 brain tumour patients at Wellington Hospital.

"It's a short bedside assessment, and is quite straightforward—we ask them to name objects, colours or actions, or to repeat words spoken to them."

Josh says the BLAST can help identify patients who may require targeted speech and language therapy.

"We hope to gain new scientific insights too—by looking at which parts of the

brain are affected by the tumour in each patient, we can explore the role each part of our brain plays in the way we communicate through speech."

Carolyn says the BLAST is helping build a better picture of how the brain works.

"We used to think there were one or two key language hubs in your brain, but the BLAST has shown that a huge portion of your left hemisphere is crucial for language."

The research has received seed funding from the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand, and Josh recently presented his work at the International Neuropsychology conference in Amsterdam.

The pair is grateful for the involvement of Wellington Hospital in the project.

"The lead neurosurgeon, Andrew Parker, has been phenomenal, and the patients are so open and willing in what are often difficult personal circumstances," says Josh.

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Debating the big issues

From human rights issues to climate change, Victoria University regularly leads debate on important issues of the day through free public lectures.

As well as showcasing the expertise of its own academics, the University also invites locally and internationally renowned guest speakers to its campuses throughout the year.

"Our inaugural professorial lecture series is especially well attended," says Vice-Chancellor Professor Grant Guilford. "These lectures feature thought-provoking commentary from Victoria's newly appointed or promoted professors."

Issues in the spotlight this year have included restorative justice, constitutional protections of human rights, criminal psychopathy and the effectiveness of psychological treatment, journeys of transformation in works of fiction and low voter turnout among young people.

Each year, the University also holds science public lectures in regional centres, enabling audiences outside Wellington to hear from some of Victoria's top speakers. Topics this year have spanned climate change, black hole thermodynamics and radio telescopes.

One of the major overseas speakers to visit Victoria this year was world-leading polar scientist Professor Robert DeConto, Professor of Geosciences at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in the United States. As the S.T. Lee Lecture's guest speaker, Robert explored the Antarctic ice sheet's contribution to future sea-level rise.

"One of the University's goals is to disseminate knowledge that has scholarly or societal impact to a wide audience," says Grant. "Our public lectures are one way of fulfilling our role as the 'critic and conscience' of society."

Recordings of many of this year's public lectures are available online. To view these and to find information on upcoming lectures, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/lecture-series



Shifting creativity up a gear

Competition winners Sean Harris and Anna-Maria Michels.

An innovative collaboration gave School of Design students the opportunity to transform BMW New Zealand's headquarters as part of a special topic course.

The challenge was to bring BMW Group's Auckland-based head office into the 21st century, representing what the global car brand stands for in 2014.

The third-year class started the project in groups and then broke off to work on individual aspects, competing against fellow classmates.

Nina Englert, managing director of BMW Group New Zealand, says collaborating with Victoria's School of Design represented a unique opportunity to assist in the education and learning of the University's students. "BMW Group is heavily involved in design through our ever-evolving model range, so it was a good fit," she says.

Course coordinator Bettina Neu says the quality of the projects made it difficult to pick one stand-out entry, with Sean Harris and Anna-Maria Michels, both

third-year Bachelor of Design Innovation students, named joint winners.

The pair were two of five finalists flown to Auckland to present their interpretations to a panel of senior managers from BMW Group New Zealand.

In the end, says Bettina, the risk-taking of Sean's concept and the comprehensive nature of Anna's concept stood out.

"The Mini brand uses the phrase, 'Be bold. Be unafraid. Be MINI.', but unfortunately that's not experienced when you go into a typical showroom," Sean says. His concept is an audiovisual installation that evokes the ultimate driving experience within a showroom environment. As customers walk into the Mini section they will hear a car ignition start, followed by a heartbeat pulse that leads them around the car. The sound increases as they move further into the room.

Anna approached the challenge differently, focusing on the physical design.

For her personal project, she looked at the stairs and reception area. Her designs

were based on the design of the new BMW i series and interior materials. "The key was to create something timeless," she says.

Anna enclosed the metal stairs with non-structural walls, including a dedicated merchandise display and floor-to-ceiling advertising screens facing the motorway—and potential clients.

For the reception area, she based her design on the new BMW i3 car interior.

Nina says it was a real pleasure hosting the class at BMW at the outset of the process, then seeing the final design concepts.

"We'll review feasibility of the respective projects to ascertain if there is a way to implement them, as they would be a fantastic new addition to our existing premises."

To view Sean's online portfolio, visit www.seanwilliamharris.com

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The changing world of work

Changes in the nature of work and employment are reflected in Victoria's decision to rename its Industrial Relations Centre.

Now known as the Centre for Labour, Employment and Work (CLEW), current research projects focus on issues such as high performance work practices, worker experiences, regulation of work and employment, flexible work arrangements and the future of work and workplaces, including areas of insecure work and the ageing workforce.

"Relationships between employers and employees, and how people organise their work and employment

relationships, has changed dramatically since 1970 when our centre was established," says Dr Stephen Blumenfeld, the director of CLEW, which is based in the School of Management at Victoria Business School.

"We will continue to have collective bargaining and union membership as a core area of research and public education, but research into the dynamics of the workplace and how workplaces can best be managed and structured to be productive and healthy is now emerging as a major focus."

» www.victoria.ac.nz/som/clew



Credit: iStock

Summer jobs with a difference

About 300 Victoria students will be brainstorming, problem solving and offering creative solutions to a host of businesses and organisations this summer as part of the University's Summer Research Scholarships programme.

Each year, the University partners with companies, government agencies and professional groups to provide a 10-week research placement for some of its top performing students. The initiative allows organisations to tackle projects they don't have the resources to do themselves.

Previous summer research has ranged from investigating the impact of in-vehicle devices on driver distraction and crash risk to assisting with planning museum exhibitions.

All students have an academic supervisor who works with the organisation and the student to ensure maximum benefit is gained from the research project.

Businesses will be invited to register their interest for the 2015–16 summer.

» www.victoria.ac.nz/research/collaborate/opportunities

Global inspiration

A youth forum in Germany has left two Victoria students with a thirst to learn more and contribute to international affairs.

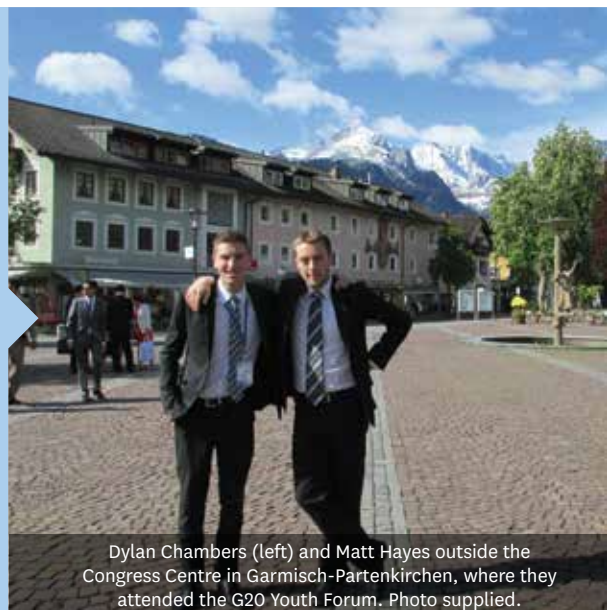
Matt Hayes and Dylan Chambers were sponsored by the Victoria International Leadership Programme to attend the G20 Youth Forum, one of the largest international events organised for young leaders in 2014. Taking part were hundreds of young leaders, including students and academics, representatives of the business world and parliamentarians.

The main highlight for me was being

surrounded by young people who not only had high hopes for the future, but who were already beginning to do amazing things with their lives," says Matt.

"In New Zealand, I read about global issues but never get much exposure to people whose lives were affected by these issues. In Germany, by contrast, all the great debates were taking place around us—for history and politics students from New Zealand that can only be described as exhilarating."

To read Matt and Dylan's blog, visit g20youthnz.wordpress.com



Dylan Chambers (left) and Matt Hayes outside the Congress Centre in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, where they attended the G20 Youth Forum. Photo supplied.

New strategic appointments

New strategic appointments are a key step towards Victoria achieving its vision of being a leading capital city university, as well as one of the world's great civic universities.

Professor Neil Quigley, who has been a senior leader at Victoria for the past 17 years, most recently as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), has been appointed New Zealand's first Provost. He is responsible for ensuring Victoria's teaching and research programmes are high quality, unified and relevant to both domestic and international communities. At the heart of the role is the University's commitment to ensuring student learning is enriched by innovative research.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Grant Guilford, says this is the first of a number of strategic leadership appointments at Victoria that signal a change in the way the University operates.

"A Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori) role has also been created. This is the most senior Māori role in any university and recognises the importance to Victoria of the Treaty of Waitangi and our partnership with tangata whenua. Professor Piri Sciascia, who has been a senior leader at Victoria for 14 years, has been appointed to this role.

"We have also appointed Professor Frazer Allan as our new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Engagement), a role that will be central to developing partnerships with our communities, as well as our goal of doubling the size of our student population in the next 20 to 30 years."

Frazer is currently the head of the Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences at Massey University and prior to this he was the Director of Massey's Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Learning through storytelling

New research shows that taking preschoolers to story-time sessions at the local library could help them with the early stages of learning to read.

Professor Anne Goulding, from Victoria's School of Information Management, together with Dr Mary Jane Shuker and Dr John Dickie from the Faculty of Education, has been observing story-time sessions run by public libraries and talking to librarians about their experiences, to see what kind of impact the sessions are having.

According to Anne, children begin to develop literacy skills from an early age, with preschoolers as young as 18 months old learning to sit and listen, turn pages and engage with books.

She says there are six key skills of literacy development in children that help determine a child's readiness to learn to read and write. These are print motivation (being interested in and enjoying books), print awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary, phonological awareness (developing understanding of how words are structured and being able to play with sounds) and narrative skills.

"We found that the librarians were especially good at print motivation—that is, encouraging a love of books and reading for pleasure. They did this by choosing exciting or interactive stories with good visuals, and telling the stories in an engaging way," says Anne.

"Many got the children involved in the story, by asking them questions about what was happening, which develops their narrative skills."

She says the only skill that librarians didn't cover extensively was letter knowledge. "When asked about this, some said they used ABC books at times, but it depended on the age of the children who turned up to the open sessions.

"There were really only two key areas where we identified room for improvement—that was in offering formal training to the storytellers, who tended to learn informally from other, more experienced librarians, and considering how story time and other activities aimed at preschoolers might be aligned with the national early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki."

Librarian Andree Reynolds at a story-time session, Wellington Central Library.

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Virtual iwi on Facebook

New Victoria research is showing the extent to which information technology is becoming culturally important for Māori.

For her Master of Information Management, Pikihiua Reihana investigated what she calls 'Ngāti Pukamata', or the 'Facebook Tribe', a virtual iwi of Māori spread across the globe, who maintain contact with their cultural roots through social media.

Pikihiua says whakapapa is a central component of Māori identity. "With Māori making fewer trips back to the marae for a variety of reasons, I wanted to find out whether social networks enhance or undermine the authority of traditional whakapapa," Pikihiua says.

She set about her research by becoming actively involved in whānau and whakapapa groups on Facebook. "Many marae, hapū and iwi have set up dedicated pages where people can communicate and find out how they're connected—be that through kaupapa or whānau.

"Social networks help Māori to maintain links with their heritage, while also creating an alternative to the oral

tradition of Māori whakapapa that usually takes place on the marae. It's another way to maintain relationships when everyone's lives are so busy."

Pikihiua says as Ngāti Pukumata and virtual iwi on social media grow, some important questions arise. "For instance, will Facebook provide a new kind of authority in the origin and recording of whakapapa? What effect might this have on Māori cultural practices that have traditionally taken place on the marae?

"We are absolutely evolving—our customs and protocols are moving into virtual space. I was at a marae recently and whānau overseas were able to be Skyped in—technology can create a kind of physical presence, proving that location is irrelevant."

Pikihiua hopes her research will shed light on how Māori identity could evolve in the future, as younger Māori embrace new technologies.

"Who knows where technology will take us?"

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Māori PhD numbers swell

The number of Māori PhD graduates at Victoria is growing rapidly.

"Every PhD completion by a Māori student was a rare event a few years back," says Professor Piri Sciascia, Victoria's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori). "This year, we expect 14 Māori students to complete doctoral study across a diverse range of disciplines."

Part of the increase, says Piri, is due to providing PhD students with regular opportunities to meet, study and write together, and funding support through initiatives such as the Ahumairangi PhD scholarship that is open to Māori students in any discipline.

In addition, a strategic decision to put a strong emphasis on completion has delivered results.

"We've worked hard to demystify PhD study and show that it's achievable, while also creating a culture where students are expected to complete, and give them the backing they need to do so."

Role modelling has also been important, says Piri, with Māori lecturers attracting Māori students.

Awanui Te Huia, one of three Victoria Māori PhD December graduates to have recently joined the University's teaching staff, agrees.

"If you can relate to your students on a cultural level and adjust content so they see themselves in what you are talking about, they are more attentive and engaged."

Awanui, whose doctoral research looked at what motivates learners of te reo Māori, says for her, doing a PhD was about enhancing credibility in the eyes of the academy. "The PhD allowed me to develop both qualitative and quantitative research skills so that I am better prepared to support Māori research projects in the future."

Awanui says support through MAI ki Pōneke, an international network of Māori and indigenous postgraduate students, Toi huarewa and the location of Victoria's Te Herenga Waka marae helped her succeed.

"At some universities, the marae is remote, but here it's very connected to the Kelburn campus. We study, teach, eat and are culturally nourished there."

» www.victoria.ac.nz/mai
» www.fis.org.nz/BreakOut/vuw/schols.phtml?detail+500468



Who's in my room?

Who's in my room? is 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.

Isabella Moore left her Auckland home to study at Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music (NZSM) in 2011. Since graduating, she has built a stellar career, this year winning the Lexus Song Quest, the Marianne Mathy Scholarship, the Dame Malvina Major Foundation Christchurch Aria competition and the Hamilton Competition's Premier Vocal Award.

The soprano says as a student she was hard-working—sometimes a little bit lazy—and a perfectionist.

Her old room at Stafford House, which offers self-contained two or three bedroom apartments, is currently occupied by first-year Bachelor of Commerce student William Walkley, also from Auckland, who doesn't share Isabella's passion for classical music but is impressed by her talent.



Isabella Moore singing at St Mary's in Holy Trinity Cathedral Church, Parnell in 2013. Credit: John Moore

Isabella Moore

How did it feel to walk into your room for the first time?

I was really excited about living at Stafford House because it allows students to have a flatting experience. It was definitely a good move for me. I got the corner room that was the biggest and had the most windows, so I was very happy about that.

What was the highlight of staying at Stafford House?

Location, location, location! It's right next door to Les Mills, so I was definitely at my fittest living at Stafford (not to mention the climb up the Terrace to NZSM). It was also close to the city centre and Lambton Quay, so was only a few minutes away from my favourite pubs and the best thick cut chips.

Your most memorable moment of living in a Hall?

I'll never forget the Rugby World Cup in 2011. I was living at Stafford and my friends and I were watching the final. When we won, Wellington went off and everyone was celebrating. It was such an awesome experience.

What was the highlight of studying at Victoria?

I was a bit lazy when it came to subjects that I wasn't passionate about, but were crucial for my degree. I became a better student studying at Victoria, and I'm really grateful because I can now say that my work ethic is strong.

What music did you like to listen to?

Being a classical music student I listened to a lot of classical music and opera. But, when I needed a break from all that I would listen to RnB, hip-hop and rap music. I have memories of my friends and I making crazy videos to Beyoncé and Lil Wayne.

What did you get up to in your spare time?

Saturday morning brunch dates with friends. It was a tradition—we'd walk along Cuba Street trying out different cafés and restaurants. Also, Wellington has the best beer! I also loved going to the New Zealand Opera productions at the St James Theatre. Always a great night out!

Your advice to incoming students?

Study hard and achieve your goals. Everything and anything is possible if you put in the hours. And make sure you go to Aro Café and get a coffee, it's the best!

William Walkley

Why did you choose to study in Wellington?

I had to get away from Auckland and experience other parts of New Zealand. This is the first time that I have lived away from home. Eighteen years was long enough—it's good to have a bit more freedom!

Why did you choose Stafford House?

The whole experience of managing and making my own food was the deciding factor when choosing the Hall I wanted to stay in.

What's the best thing about the Hall so far?

The staff, hands down. Everyone from the managers to Jeff the security guard. They are all helpful and make my time at Stafford enjoyable.

What do you think about staying in Isabella Moore's old room?

She seems to be carving out an impressive career. It is cool to know that someone who is achieving in her adult life started in the same place that I am starting mine.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Stafford House is an international Hall of Residence, so there is a massively diverse range of people. Chatting to my fellow residents in the common room and learning about their different cultures is awesome. I also like indulging in what the city has to offer—everything from having a stroll on the waterfront to having a game of pool at the pub.

What type of student are you?

Just your usual first-year business student. I am fresh out of high school and learning the ropes of independence. Next year will be more challenging, but I'll come to that hurdle when it gets here.

Do you share Isabella's musical interests?

I'm more of a Fleetwood Mac, Dave Dobbyn or David Gray man myself.

Connecting with alumni

Over the past few months alumni events have been held in London, Malaysia, New York, Singapore, Auckland and Wellington. To view more photos of alumni at these events, visit www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends



The alumni function in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, was held at the residence of the New Zealand High Commissioner, His Excellency David Pine. From left: Angie Gow, Shafie Leow, Stuart Gould, Jacinta Gould, Keechiang Yong.



The Singapore alumni event was held at the residence of the New Zealand High Commissioner, Her Excellency Bernadette Cavanagh. From left: Adelene Han, Irene Han, K K Han.



In April, almost 70 Wellington-based alumni gathered at a Young Alumni event to hear young entrepreneurs Matt Rowe and Tim Pointer, alumni who founded Wellington-based company Uprise Digital.



In August, the alumni relations office hosted its first ever Young Alumni event in Auckland, featuring Brendan Jarvis, the founder of digital agency The Space InBetween, as guest speaker. From left: Bevan Fair, Bevan Callaghan, Brendan Jarvis, Jeremy Greenbrook-Held, Alumni Relations Manager Chris Hooper.



Alice Faull (left) and Jenna McMillan at the Young Alumni event in Auckland.



An alumni function at Parliament in July was hosted by Hon Bill English. From left: Phil Stevenson, Eileen Baxter, Leigh Haistead.

SPACE EXPERT

David Stevenson

Professor of Planetary Science, California Institute of Technology (Caltech)
BSc MSc DSc *Well*, PhD *C'nell*



David Stevenson talks at a news conference at Cape Canaveral at the time of the launch of Juno. Photo supplied.

Describe your career since graduating from Victoria.

My career has been devoted to scientific research and teaching, with the nature of planets as a common theme.

Having spent most of my career based at Caltech in Pasadena, California, I

have been involved in space missions, like Juno—a billion-dollar spacecraft currently headed for Jupiter.

I was heavily involved in recent work that shows that Saturn's small moon, Enceladus, has an ocean beneath its ice shell.

What is a particular highlight of your career to date?

There has not been a singular highlight, but a sustained pleasure from learning about planets, being involved with NASA and the opportunity to work with young scientists from around the world.

What are some of your favourite memories of Victoria?

I listened to Neil Armstrong landing on the Moon on the radio in a physics lab.

My lasting memory of chemistry is the unpleasant smell of hydrogen sulphide.

I have fond memories of the Hunter building which then housed the physics department, even though some of the labs

were dilapidated. The building has been nicely redone—how fortunate it was saved!

Describe your student experience.

As a student, I was largely invisible. I spent a lot of time in the lab and in later years programming the earliest substantial computer on campus—the Elliott 503. It was very capable for its time, but now a joke by current standards.

What was the most useful thing you learnt?

The importance of the fundamentals, which for me was maths and physics. I also came to appreciate the value of good teaching, both when I saw it and when I saw its absence.

What has stayed with you since you left Victoria?

I did not appreciate the unity of science. I would have been surprised if anyone had suggested value in learning any geology, but this was something I picked up many years later and have since taught!

DANCE DIVA

Deirdre Tarrant

Founding Director of Footnote Dance
BA *Well*



What kind of work have you been doing since you graduated in 1967?

I graduated from Victoria as quickly as possible, so I could leave for London to dance, which I have been doing pretty much ever since. My career has spanned classical ballet, contemporary

dance, teaching, examining, tutoring, lecturing, mentoring—and loving dance, particularly New Zealand dancers.

Where did you live while you were studying?

I moved into a small one-bedroom studio in Rawhiti Terrace, from my family home in Upper Hutt, which is possibly why I gravitated to the large open spaces of dance studios and stages.

Describe your student experience at Victoria.

Busy! I was dancing in the New Zealand Ballet Company and teaching dancing, so my university choices were all tailored to these timetables. I remember madly cramming as exams came near, sitting on the gravestones of the Mount Street Cemetery. I loved the fabulous drama club and being involved in the Extravaganza shows!

I guess I was political—always attending rallies, marches or rehearsals, so my

class attendance was a bit random. I did become focused as exams came near—there was no sense in not achieving!

Have you kept any connections with Victoria?

In 2006, I was incredibly honoured to be made one of the first Distinguished Alumni. I remember standing at the podium alongside other truly incredible alumni, thinking about how life is such a tapestry and every stitch holds forever.

What have been the highlights of your career to date?

One offstage highlight was when I was awarded the Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit last year, for changing the face of the country's dance industry. Every time a dancer steps onstage to perform works choreographed by talented Kiwis is a highlight for me. This is closely rivalled by the joy of teaching young dancers every day in Cuba Street.



1970 group portrait of Weir House residents, some of whom will be at the November reunion (for the names of people in the photo visit www.victoria.ac.nz/weir-house-residents). Credit: Weir House Residents' Association archives. J.C. Beaglehole Room (VUW 2/384)

Reunion in the capital

A group of Victoria alumni from New Zealand, Australia, Singapore and Malaysia will soon gather in Wellington to celebrate and remember their student days.

Among the participants will be Law alumnus Tan Sri Chong Kah Kiat, one of many Malaysian students who studied at Victoria during the 1970s.

"KK", as he likes to be known, became interested in the legal profession when he discovered Perry Mason detective stories as a youngster. He decided to pursue Law at university, and eventually found himself in a "sleepy, but clean and green" Wellington in 1971.

"My two most admired lawyers in my home state of Sabah in Malaysia were both outstanding graduates of Victoria University, and New Zealand and Australia had been (and continue to be) favourite education destinations for Malaysian students," says KK.

Unlike many other Southeast Asian students who were contemporaries of KK's, he chose to go flatting in Kelburn, rather than stay in a hostel.

Favourite pastimes included spending lazy weekends on the sloping hills of the

city's Botanic Garden and playing sports, especially squash and tennis.

But it wasn't all rest and relaxation and, in fact, his leadership skills were able to shine through his love of sport, as he founded and led the organisation of the first New Zealand Malaysian students' sports tournament in 1974. This saw around 100 Malaysian students from around the country gather in Wellington for a competitive tournament, which also led to some lifelong friendships.

"My five years at Victoria gave me invaluable opportunities—including establishing a good network of friends."

On completing his Master of Laws degree, KK returned to Malaysia, where he joined a private legal practice, but quickly became active in politics. His long, successful political career included time as a minister in the Prime Minister's Department and later as the Minister of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology in his home of Sabah, culminating as the Chief Minister of Sabah.

Many of his Southeast Asian colleagues who studied at Victoria have also gone on to high-profile careers in areas including business, the legal profession, arts and culture, politics and science.

The connection between these graduates has proved so strong over the years that a large group of alumni, including KK, who studied together

during the 1970s have stayed in touch and organised reunions from time to time.

Two of these have been held in Malaysia, in 2008 and 2012, and at the end of this year, the group will undertake their first New Zealand reunion.

The get together will include several days in Wellington, including visits to Victoria Business School and other faculties, a tour of Weir House and a welcome on to Te Herenga Waka Marae on Kelburn campus. The group will also attend question time at Parliament and an afternoon tea in the Grand Hall, hosted by Members of Parliament, and a special celebration dinner hosted by University Chancellor Ian McKinnon and his wife Jenny, in honour of the occasion.

"Although I've returned to New Zealand several times since my student days, I'm very much looking forward to seeing old friends and colleagues back where it all began in Wellington," KK says.

Visit victoria.ac.nz/international/engagement for more information about Victoria's international engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.

Alumni events will be taking place in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam in November 2014. See www.victoria.ac.nz/alumniandfriends for more details or contact Lisa Li, Alumni Relations Advisor at lisa.li@vuw.ac.nz.



IIML Director Damien Wilkins (in blue) gets ready to discuss PhD research with Angela Andrews, Peter Cox and other creative writing students.

Writing doctors

A novelist with a doctorate used to be a rare thing, says the director of Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML), but not so these days.

Since 2009, 14 writers have graduated from IIML's PhD programme and, each year, many more applications are received than can be accepted. There are currently 11 active PhD candidates.

"In the United States, a PhD has almost become the norm for anyone wanting to teach creative writing," says Professor Damien Wilkins.

"Here it's less about the job market and more about providing opportunities for people to write creatively, while also having time to think in original and innovative ways."

That was what motivated Peter Cox to return to university at the start of this year.

He graduated from the IIML with a Master's of Creative Writing in 2002 and a completed script that went on to be made into the award-winning television series *The Insider's Guide to Happiness*.

After more than a decade in the industry, Peter is relishing the challenge of again encountering new ideas and perspectives from other writers at the IIML and being able to focus purely on story construction, characters and technical aspects of his form.

"As a television scriptwriter in a small country like New Zealand, you have to keep your themes broad and you find

yourself regularly in conversations about where and when a programme will be shown and distributed and having to adjust your material accordingly. It's just a reality of the industry, but I increasingly found it tiresome."

Peter is working on two television scripts for the creative component of his PhD and, for the critical component, he is examining what happens in the 'writer's room', the place where scriptwriters gather to thrash out story lines for television series.

"The two strands of work feed into each other," he says. "On one hand, I am looking at what other writers go through in the process of a collaborative, negotiated authorship, while also looking at what my own 'voice' is, or isn't, as I write my scripts."

Peter's work, says Damien, illustrates one of the innovative things about the IIML's PhD programme—support for "hybrid theses" in which the creative and critical components are inextricably interwoven.

Another example is Angela Andrews' project that looks at the relationships between medicine and poetry. Angela, a qualified doctor, explores the nature of medical understanding through essays and poems about clinical encounters,

illness and the mind-body axis, using her experiences of being a patient, family member, medical student and a doctor.

The interdisciplinary nature of many students' research topics is also a stand-out feature of the PhD programme. Students are collaborating, or have done, with scientists, musicians, art historians and architects to inform their work.

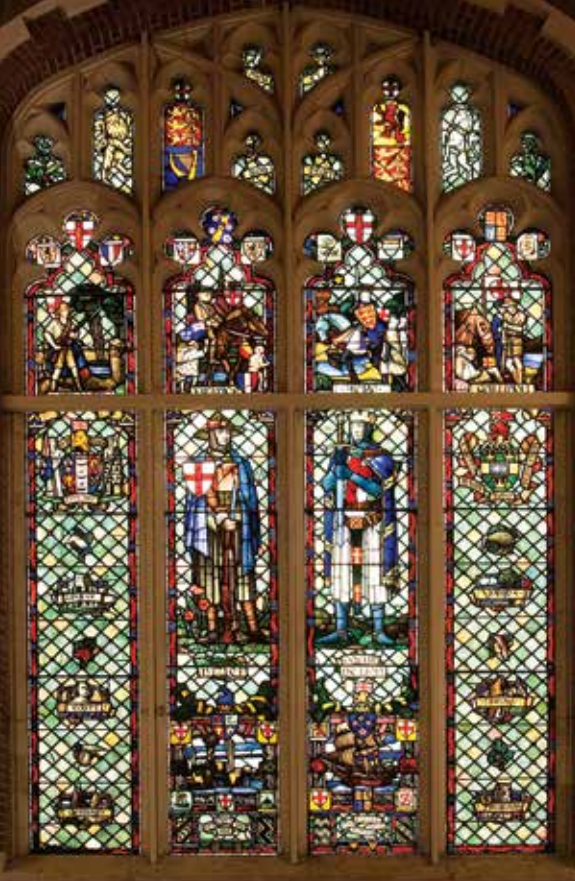
By the end of 2014, eight books will have been published from the PhD programme, which, says Damien, is a good indicator of the seriousness of research outputs. Several of these books have won major literary awards.

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Stellar success

The IIML is New Zealand's oldest and most prestigious creative writing programme that counts among its graduates the winner of the 2013 Man Booker Prize, Eleanor Catton, and many other leading New Zealand contemporary writers.

The Institute offers a one-year Master's programme in writing for the page or scriptwriting and a three-year PhD programme. www.victoria.ac.nz/modernletters



Vote to elect two members to the University Council

There are five nominees for the two four-year term Court of Convocation vacancies on the Victoria University Council from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018. An election will be held on **Friday 14 November 2014**, with the polls closing at **5pm**.

Candidates for election

- Brian **McCULLOCH**
- Stephen **McGILL**
- Matthew **PALMER**
- Helen **SUTCH**
- Rachel **TAULELEI**

Candidate profiles can be viewed at www.victoria.ac.nz/court-of-convocation

Eligibility to vote

Graduates of the University who are enrolled on the Court of Convocation register are eligible to vote. You will be sent voting documents by the end of October if you are currently enrolled. Registration closes on **Thursday 16 October at 5pm**.

To confirm your status on the register or to notify a change of details, contact the Returning Officer Caroline Ward on 04-463 5196 or caroline.ward@vuw.ac.nz



Credit: Dylan Miller

Writing through pain

A decade of chronic pain has been the creative catalyst for writer Stephanie de Montalk's latest book, a memoir called *How Does It Hurt?*, which will be published by Victoria University Press in November.

Stephanie suffers from intractable pelvic pain as the result of nerve damage following a fall in 2003. Her condition is obscure and at the time of her accident, treatment was only available in the United States and France. In 2004, Stephanie travelled to France for surgery even though relief was not guaranteed. Over the past decade, her pain has worsened.

Despite that, she wrote a novel and two books of poetry during this period. She says the idea of writing a memoir first came to her in 2008 but, at first, she shied away from writing about pain.

"Society demands stoicism, and in this respect I found that while it was acceptable to talk about acute or temporary pain, to mention constant pain evokes disinterest and suggestions of exaggeration. It also is difficult to write about pain plainly, because of its resistance to verbal expression."

She says that the 19th century French writer Alphonse Daudet's account of his own pain consoled and influenced her.

"Through Daudet, I found it became acceptable to write about severe and continuing pain."

In the end she found herself using a 'hybrid' form of writing, encompassing

personal essay, memoir, poetry and critical analysis to describe her experience with pain.

"I put my study into a personal narrative because I didn't want it to feel imagined or removed. I'd been bolstered by the frank presence and emotional closeness of some of the pain memoirists I'd read. These were writers who could say with unassailable conviction, 'this is how pain is for me; this is the truth of the matter'. I wanted to write something as immediate, that a reader on the cliff face of pain could cling to, or a bystander would feel drawn to."

Stephanie has had a varied career as a nurse, documentary filmmaker and writer. *How Does It Hurt?* is her seventh book and was written for her PhD in Creative Writing through the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML).

"I made an early decision to interweave the critical and creative components of the PhD, instead of presenting them separately. I wanted to take myself and my readers on a journey of discovery. The support I received from my supervisors, the staff and students at the IIML went beyond my expectations."

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Simon Denny, *The Personal Effects of Kim Dotcom 2014*, installation view at the Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University of Wellington ©Simon Denny. Credit: Shaun Waugh

Investigating Kim Dotcom's personal effects

Twenty-two luxury cars, US \$175 million in cash, numerous flat screen televisions and computer servers, bank accounts and works of art are among 110 objects referenced in the Adam Art Gallery's latest exhibition, *The Personal Effects of Kim Dotcom*.

The exhibition, by New Zealand-born, Berlin-based artist Simon Denny, recreates the personal property that was confiscated in the 2012 police raid on internet entrepreneur Kim Dotcom's New Zealand mansion.

Originally presented at the Museum of Modern Art (mumok) in Vienna, Austria, and then staged at Firstsite in Colchester, England, Simon Denny's show has been reconfigured for the Adam Art Gallery spaces.

"Over the last two years, Kim Dotcom has dominated New Zealand's media landscape," says Adam Art Gallery director, Christina Barton. "Simon Denny uses this larger-than-life character, and the traumatic event that brought him to public attention, to ask questions about

property rights and privacy and the evolving status of information."

Gallery staff have played a significant role in helping to find items for the show. "It's been an intriguing exercise to work with Simon to realise this," says Christina. "One of our biggest challenges has been interpreting the list according to our own resources and space constraints."

This included finding a solution for representing \$175 million in US currency, which was achieved by converting the amount into New Zealand dollars, then sourcing the equivalent weight in granulated out-of-circulation currency.

Other objects have been sourced from businesses and private collections, for example, a state of the art Sea-Doo jetski, a high end custom motorbike, and a Predator sculpture weighing 800 kilograms made of scrap metal, as well as Toyota car parts and servers from the University's own IT service.

A unique aspect of the Wellington show is the repainting of a mural by graffiti artists Cut Collective, who Dotcom

originally commissioned to paint his gaming room.

"In some senses, this show gives us insights into Kim Dotcom's extravagant lifestyle, yet because the items are only those confiscated by police, it also exposes those dimensions that are of interest to the authorities. In this sense the exhibition explores the fate of the individual in a digital age where the very concepts of property, privacy and freedom of information are at stake."

Simon Denny is fast emerging as a leading contemporary artist. He has been selected to represent New Zealand at the 2015 Venice Biennale and a selection of his recent works has been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a rare achievement for an artist born in New Zealand.

The Personal Effects of Kim Dotcom runs until 19 December.

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