

# The Paul Morris Scholarship in Religious Diversity and Inclusion

Celebrating a champion of religious diversity



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF  
**WELLINGTON**  
TE HERENGA WAKA

The study of religion explores the horizons of human diversity and possibility. It invites us to understand the very different ways that people live their lives. In Study of Religion (formerly Religious Studies) we examine the world's faiths in their interactions with politics and society, morality and ethics, and in the shaping of human imagination and experience.

The Study of Religion programme at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington is more than 50 years old. Over its history, the programme has grown to be one of the largest and most influential of its kind in Australasia, with a longstanding reputation for outstanding teaching and cutting-edge research.



Paul Morris was appointed in 1994 as the programme's second Professor in Religious Studies, following the Foundation Professor Sir Lloyd Geering. He served for nearly a quarter of a century in this role before being made Professor Emeritus in 2019.

Under Paul's leadership, Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington expanded to become the flagship programme in the discipline nationwide, and the largest such programme in the southern hemisphere.

We are delighted to launch the **Paul Morris Scholarship in Religious Diversity and Inclusion** to celebrate Paul's contribution to the development of Study of Religion as a broad, critical, and independent discipline. We are seeking to raise **\$100,000** to support students undertaking research on topics related to religious diversity and inclusion in New Zealand and the Pacific including topics such as religions and social cohesion, religious minorities, interfaith relations, religious identities, discrimination and exclusion, religion and government policy, and religious literacy and competency.

Paul is a popular teacher whose lively, engaging, and intellectually challenging lectures attracted many students to study religion as a vibrant and dynamic field of enquiry. During his career Paul combined a rigorous approach to scholarship with an energetic public presence.

Paul authored the landmark National Statement on Religious Diversity for the Human Rights Commission in 2007 and helped establish the Religious Diversity Centre. He has played a significant role in encouraging interfaith dialogue and understanding and in establishing a regular national religious leaders' forum, the first body of its kind in New Zealand.



An international authority in this area whose expert advice is always in high demand, Paul received the 2007 ICCJ Gold Medal for Peace through Dialogue. He was appointed UNESCO Professor of Interreligious Understanding and Relations in New Zealand and the Pacific in 2010, a role he still holds.

Paul's published books and articles reflect the range of his academic interests in religions and include a Montana New Zealand Book Award in 2003 for an anthology of spiritual verse. For many years he was the main media commentator on religious and cultural diversity issues in New Zealand, including a long-running series on Radio New Zealand.

We invite you to support the **Paul Morris Scholarship in Religious Diversity and Inclusion** in recognition of Paul's contribution to religious and cultural debate in this country. Your gift will help a new generation of postgraduate students explore the role of religions in the contemporary world. Through this scholarship you can make a transformational difference to students, giving them the opportunity to pursue higher study in Study of Religion.

A donation of any amount will help us to continue Paul's legacy of informed and thoughtful commentary in our communities. We make a commitment to all our donors that 100% of your gift goes directly to supporting the scholarship with no administration charge deducted. Donations may be eligible for a charitable gift taxation rebate. You can donate online at:

<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/engage/giving/donate/areas/other>

**Thank you for your interest in our Study of Religion programme.  
If you would like to discuss this opportunity further, contact:**

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