

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO | MAY 2022

# MAGAZINE

ISSUE

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on their new roles

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biggest media companies



UNIVERSITY  
of  
OTAGO

Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtāgo  
NEW ZEALAND

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As you’ve probably noticed, the *Otago Magazine* looks and feels a bit different this time. Our usual printer, Ovato, closed its heatset printing operation in April, so we shifted to Blue Star. Then, due to global paper shortages, our normal paper was not available. We welcome your feedback on this edition’s paper.

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A magazine for alumni and friends of the University

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## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COMMENT

# Tēnā koutou katoa

It was obvious to me from even before I started as Vice-Chancellor in February that I was arriving during a time of major change for the University of Otago and, indeed, for universities globally.



## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COMMENT

“The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the important role universities play in society ... Solving the world’s toughest problems demands innovation as well as broad and deep thinking, and universities have a critical role and duty to the communities we serve.”

**ONE MONTH AFTER** taking up my new role, Stephen Higgs started as the new Chancellor of the University. It is unusual to have both Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor commencing in such close proximity, although both of us know the University very well.

We are also dealing with what we hope will be the latter stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, we are emerging from an Omicron outbreak in Aotearoa New Zealand that has affected the lives and the work of our students, staff and the communities we serve. This has created challenges for the start of 2022, with another return to online learning instead of face-to-face lectures, and has caused significant disruption to the usual activities that celebrate the start of a new academic year. Many events have been postponed or cancelled or have shifted to different formats.

Yet again, our staff have worked tirelessly to welcome students and to provide the best possible learning experience for them all. The student body have shown considerable leadership and initiative in supporting fellow students, including with the delivery of thousands of care packages for those in isolation. Our residential colleges have responded well to the added challenges of managing large numbers of COVID-19 cases and contacts.

Needless to say, student and staff welfare has been a priority focus for the year so far.

Once again, I would like to thank all of you who have donated to Pūtea Tautoko, the student hardship fund.

Globally, COVID-19 has forced changes in the way universities deliver teaching and learning activities. Many of these changes were simply necessary to keep our programmes going in the face of lockdowns and other public health interventions. However, there was a compelling argument for universities to become more adaptive even before the pandemic. Our task now is to capture the good lessons from the pandemic to create resilience and emerge stronger from this time of change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the important role universities play in society. University of Otago staff continue to contribute disproportionately to the COVID-19 response in Aotearoa New Zealand, providing technical expertise, strategic advice and expert commentary to the public. This collective expertise will continue to be needed as we emerge from the pandemic and refocus on the world’s other big challenges. Solving the world’s toughest problems demands innovation as well as broad and deep thinking, and universities have a critical role and duty to the communities we serve.

For the University of Otago, this is the time to define our place in the world. We are developing the University’s future strategic direction document *Vision 2040*,

strengthening our partnership with mana whenua and understanding better what it means to be an organisation led by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The recent appointment of two wahine Māori deans, at our Christchurch campus and at the Dunedin School of Medicine, is a real milestone for the University (see pages 6–9).

I would like to end with another couple of important acknowledgments. This year marked the end of Dr Royden Somerville QC’s 12 years on the University Council, including as Chancellor since 2018 (see pages 18–20). Royden has been an absolute champion for the University of Otago and I am confident this support will continue in other ways. I would also like to acknowledge Professor Helen Nicholson’s role as Acting Vice-Chancellor for the 10 months until January this year. This was a big job to take on and Helen’s work in this role has been greatly appreciated by staff and students. A huge thank you to both of you, and a personal thanks from me for helping ease my transition to the Vice-Chancellor role.

Kia kaha



**Vice-Chancellor**  
**Professor David Murdoch**



# Landmark wahine Māori leadership

Photos: Neil Macbeth

The University of Otago has welcomed two wahine Māori leaders to pivotal positions, with Professor Suzanne Pitama taking up the role of Dean and Head of the University of Otago, Christchurch, and Professor Joanne Baxter being named the next Dean of the Dunedin School of Medicine.

Photos: Alan Dove



## Suzanne Pitama: building on a legacy of Māori leaders

Professor Suzanne Pitama brings a lifetime of experience and achievement to her history-making role as the first Māori female Dean and Head of Campus at the University of Otago, Christchurch (UOC).

### HER APPOINTMENT FOLLOWS

decades of academic success, awards and a raft of senior University positions, most recently as Associate Dean Māori at UOC and Director of the Māori Indigenous Health Institute (MIHI).

Pitama (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Whare) also brings a leadership style of her own, with origins going back to her roots in a small village on tribal land in northern Hawkes Bay.

She was brought up in te reo Māori, surrounded by nannies and extended family, with three marae in easy walking distance of her whānau homestead.

"I now know that was a privilege, but I didn't think of it like that at the time – it was just my normal," says Pitama. "I was raised in a collective community, and I think my

"I was raised in a collective community, and I think my leadership reflects that upbringing. It's about collectivism, collegiality and collaboration."

leadership reflects that upbringing. It's about collectivism, collegiality and collaboration."

Pitama was the first of her family to go to university, studying Psychology, which was suggested to her by a school guidance counsellor. "Having had lots of people around me at home was a good introduction to dealing with people – and I thought it could be a good way of giving back to my community later on."

After a BA in Psychology and Māori Studies Pitama took advice to get life experience before starting postgraduate work, spending 18 months on a mission with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After an MA, she completed a postgraduate diploma in Educational Psychology and registered as a practising psychologist.

"Educational Psychology allowed me to work in a holistic way, so to support children, I was able to work alongside the child, their school, their communities and their families."

In 2001 Pitama and her husband Hare (Ngāi Tahu) moved south to Christchurch to be closer to his whānau and she joined the UOC as a lecturer in the Department of Public Health.

She was still practising as a psychologist, but gradually she became a full-time academic, with a breakthrough PhD in 2013 on the design, implementation and impact of indigenous health curricula within medical schools.

Much of Pitama's current research focuses on Māori health equity. Projects funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) involve work on mental health (led by Associate Professor

Cameron Lacey) and on cardiovascular disease (led by Clinical Senior Lecturer Philip Adamson). Several of her many other projects investigate chronic illness and the experiences indigenous patients have in the health system.

She is a board member of the HRC, where she chairs the Māori Health Committee, and until recently was a director on the Australia Medical Council, and Chair of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island and Māori committee.

Other professional involvement includes the New Zealand Psychological Society, He Paiaaka Tōtara (Māori psychologist roopu) and the Ministry of Health Māori Health Action Plan Advisory group (Whakamaaua) (2019-2020).

Service roles include Hauora Māori faculty representative at the Otago Medical School and co-Director of Te Poutama Rau, which aims to utilise Māori learning methods within tertiary education. She has recently been a committee member reviewing the University's Mirror on Society overseeing health professional courses.

Pitama has also been involved in editorial roles on the *New Zealand Medical Journal* and *The Clinical Teacher*, where she guest-edited a special edition on diversity and equity.

Awards include the Prime Minister's Supreme Award for Tertiary Teaching Excellence in 2015, the Indigenous Leadership Award from the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education (Australasian) Community of Practice, and the Royal Society of New Zealand's Joan Metge Medal in 2018 for her research





**PROFESSOR SUZANNE PITAMA** in a Māori Indigenous Health Institute (MIHI)-led mobile paediatric vaccination clinic in early January.  
Photo: Trinity Thompson-Browne

“I explained that if the UOC was Hogwarts then I was Dumbledore. He was pretty impressed with that.”

around indigenous medical education.

Pitama feels she is following in the footsteps of inspirational Māori leaders.

“When I think of our earliest graduates like Te Rangihiroa, the first Māori Dean of a Medical School, Professor Eru Pomare, the work in te reo Māori from Professor Poia Rewi, and mana wahine leadership like Professor Jacinta Ruru, I realise the mahi they put in, and the work before me now to build on their legacies.”

Pitama had never considered she was destined for the top job in Christchurch, but realises that she was probably being shepherded in that direction.

“I worked with some amazing people at the University of Otago, Christchurch and I suspect I had been getting some coaching – invisible to me – to gradually keep advancing to more senior leadership roles. When the opportunity to apply to be Dean arose, a lot of my peers encouraged me to go for it. So it’s been pretty humbling to realise how I’ve been guided into this role. I could say my peers talked me into it. Now I’m here I have to deliver.

“It’s exciting and I have got a lot of great people around me equally committed to attaining our goals, which include fostering growth at the UOC.”

Pitama’s vision includes implementing governance that aligns with full name Te Tiriti o Waitangi, ensuring the campus is well-positioned to contribute to the upcoming national health reforms, and increasing awareness of UOC’s brand.

“Christchurch is different from Dunedin. The University has been part of Dunedin for more than 150 years and the two are embedded together. We reach our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Otago next year and we want to develop a similar relationship between the University and the city.

“We’re already well connected with many communities here, having shared so many experiences such as the earthquakes and the rebuilding and the terrorist attack. But our brand has not aligned with our ongoing commitment to our community.

“We need to work harder to build our profile to the point where the University is as much embedded in Christchurch as it is in Dunedin so I’m keen to explore ways of doing that – from something as simple as getting a UOC T-shirt printed, or as complex as engaging in more formal relationships with key stakeholders.

“It’s social accountability to play an active part in our local community and we need to keep refining that.”

Other challenges include tackling the fallout from COVID-19, which has overshadowed the last couple of years.

“We’ve all got COVID and Zoom overload. I look forward to working alongside staff and students to improve their experiences on campus. We need to inject humanity back into the workplace.”

National health reforms are an opportunity for the UOC, says Pitama. “We have to ensure we have a place and space in the new New Zealand health system. We need a voice and a place at the table discussing how it is going to work so we can submit on how we can enhance it. There are many questions about the role of health research and how we navigate those is going to be challenging. We’re up for it.”

She is excited that her predecessor as Dean, Professor David Murdoch, is now the new Vice-Chancellor. “He really understands the needs of a northern campus. He has been an amazing leader here, so I’m confident that the calls he makes for the University as a whole will be the right ones.”

Pitama was surprised that being appointed

Dean put her in the spotlight as a woman and as a Māori – a situation that she hopes one day might not be news. “If these things were the norm it would be amazing, and we’d be saying why didn’t it happen earlier?”

“Initially, I wasn’t ready for the focus on me as inspiration, but a recent incident changed my thinking. I was teaching a small group session in a Māori community and a young wahine medical student rushed up and gave me a hug, saying: ‘Now I realise I can do anything’.

“I suddenly understood the importance of being in my new role. So while my student was inspired by me, I’ve been inspired by her reaction. What I’m doing may be just my job but it’s also so much bigger and much more important than that.”

Pitama has earned support from her husband’s whānau in Christchurch as well as her own.

“I’ve spent 30 years working with Māori communities and I’m still interested in finding ways to contribute in these areas. Starting my new role I wondered what expectations Ngāi Tahu might have. They said they had backed us for 20 years and had no intentions of changing that now. So it is wonderful to have support from both my own tribe and that of my in-laws.

“One of the joys of whānau is that if one of you is successful everyone feels they have a part in that success – it’s a reflection on all of them, and in many ways that’s perfectly valid, because that’s where you come from.”

She also understands the importance of good communication, even with a young relative and Harry Potter fan who recently asked her what she did as the new Dean.

“I explained that if the UOC was Hogwarts then I was Dumbledore. He was pretty impressed with that.”

**NIGEL ZEGA**

## Joanne Baxter: Māori values underpin leadership

The appointment of wahine Māori leaders across two of Otago’s three medical campuses is significant for both the University and the country.

### PROFESSOR JOANNE BAXTER

(Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Mamoe, Waitaha, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō) will take up the position of Dean of the Dunedin School of Medicine in July, her appointment following that of Professor Suzanne Pitama to Dean and Head of Campus at the University of Otago, Christchurch.

University of Otago Vice-Chancellor Professor David Murdoch says the appointments of Pitama and Baxter to these roles is cause for great celebration for the Division of Health Sciences and University.

“These two wahine Māori professors have been transformational in their efforts to address inequities and in their contributions to Hauora Māori and Māori health workforce development. They are both outstanding role models.”

With more than 20 years working in the Dunedin School of Medicine concurrent with more than 10 years in roles in the wider Division of Health Sciences, Baxter is committed to the University as a place that can make a real difference in education and health for individuals, whānau and communities through teaching, research and service.

“Leadership positions are a privilege, and I feel very privileged to have been appointed,” she says.

Baxter has whakapapa to Poutini Ngāi Tahu on the West Coast, and Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō in the upper South Island.

“Māori values underpin my approach to leadership including values of whakawhanaungatanga – strong relationships and connections, whakamana – upholding mana and integrity, and manaakitanga – generosity, support and looking after.”

She says having two wahine Māori leaders in these key roles is important.

“The University is signalling an intent to embed making meaningful contributions locally, nationally and in the Pacific, alongside its international reputation. The new Vice-Chancellor has signalled a commitment to a culture that embodies Te Tiriti o Waitangi, equity, inclusion and antiracism. This appointment allows me to support the Dunedin School of Medicine to align with this vision, culture and commitment.”

The pair is looking forward to working together, and with Professor William Levack in Wellington.

“These two wahine Māori professors have been transformational in their efforts to address inequities and in their contributions to hauora Māori and Māori health workforce development. They are both outstanding role models.”

Pitama says she and Baxter have worked together over the last 20 years on the Hauora Māori curriculum, Māori mental health research projects, and in their roles of Associate Dean Māori within their respective Medical schools.

“So I am excited that we get to continue to work together in these new capacities,”



Pitama says. “Jo has worked extremely hard to bring equity to the health professional programme’s admissions policies with the Division of Health Sciences, so I am confident her equity lens and leadership style will further support the growth and development of the Dunedin School of Medicine.”

Baxter is a public health medicine physician. Her research includes epidemiology and mental health, equity and Māori health, and health services.

She is currently the Director of Kōhatu Centre for Hauora Māori in the Division of Health Sciences, co-Director of Māori Health Workforce Development Unit (within Kōhatu), and Professor for Māori Health in

the Dunedin School of Medicine. Nationally, she is involved in the health workforce and sits on the Ministry of Health’s Health Workforce Advisory Committee.

She says she is grateful for the support she has received in stepping up to her new role.

**LISA DICK**



# Helping cure TB

Otago scientists are contributing to cutting-edge research which could transform the treatment of tuberculosis (TB) and eliminate it as one of the world's most prominent infectious diseases.

Photos: Sharron Bennett

**THE PROTEIN AT THE HEART OF THE WORK:** bd oxidase, which helps *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the deadly bacteria that causes tuberculosis (TB), to breathe.

**IN THE LAB ...** Professors Kurt Krause and Greg Cook.

**KURT KRAUSE AND GREG COOK** share a dream: To transform the treatment of TB from a six- to 18-month protocol of hard-to-tolerate medicines to a short course of antibiotics.

Their target? Bd oxidase, a protein which helps *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the deadly bacteria that causes tuberculosis (TB), to breathe.

The Otago Professors, from Biochemistry, and Microbiology and Immunology respectively, and their team have been working in close collaboration with Nobel laureate Professor Hartmut Michel and Dr Schara Safarian from the Max Planck Institute of Biophysics in Germany to

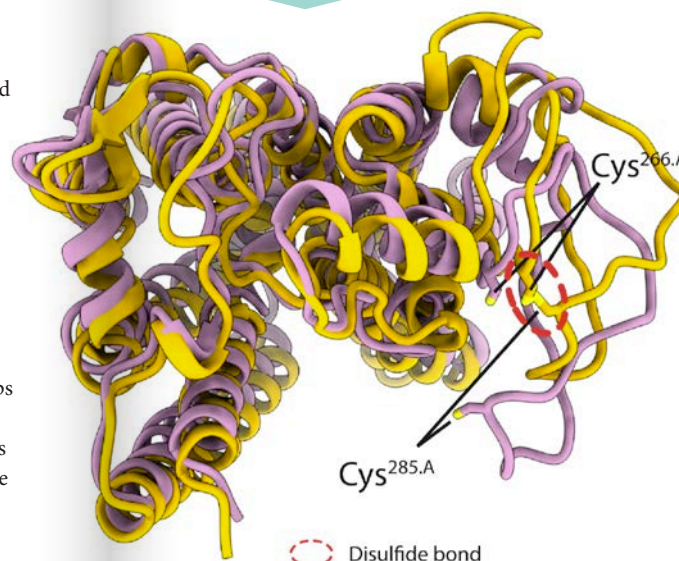
determine the atomic structure of the bd oxidase protein, so new TB drugs can be designed to target it.

"Right now if you get TB you are signed up for six months of therapy," explains Kraus. "You start out taking four drugs – a tonne of pills that are very hard to tolerate – and continue on two to four medicines for six months. If you happen to have a resistant TB strain you may be taking drugs for 18 months."

For the two researchers, the holy grail is to be able to treat TB like any other infection with an antibiotic prescription for a week or two.

Krause, who worked in the US as an

Infectious Diseases clinician, could see how prevalent TB was in his HIV-infected patients and became involved in the use of X-ray crystallography to determine the structure of potential drug targets in pathogenic microorganisms. Cook, following postdoctoral study overseas on respiratory enzymes, returned to New Zealand in 1998 and became interested in the metabolism and respiration of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* realising that New Zealand had a number of groups working on this pathogen. Most of the ongoing TB research in New Zealand was focused on the animal form of the disease caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*.



Krause and Cook started working together on TB in 2005 and their research was able to progress to another level in 2013 when the University acquired a special lab with physical containment level III capabilities for this research. Since then TB research has grown at the University of Otago with strong international links. Some of this research occurs under the umbrella of the Maurice Wilkins Centre for Molecular Biodiscovery, a Centre of Research Excellence with a focus on TB research.

One of the new projects to come out of these collaborations was the realisation that the molecular machinery that *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* uses to breathe

oxygen is essential for the survival of *M. tuberculosis* in infected patients, which in turn led to the realisation that starving TB for oxygen could be a new strategy for developing anti-TB drugs.

"That was a eureka moment as current dogma at that time suggested TB could survive in host tissues without oxygen," says Cook.

TB uses two proteins to respire with oxygen. One of the proteins proved to be a good target and now there are drugs in clinical testing, but the other protein, bd oxidase, which is being studied at Otago, was uncharacterised in the pathogen.

A Marsden grant was obtained in 2016



“If we can target the two enzymes in TB that together respire with oxygen then we can potentially rapidly cure TB infections, and over time we would have the potential to eradicate TB completely from humans.”

**PROFESSORS KURT KRAUSE AND GREG COOK:** “That’s the beauty of the Marsden Fund. They fund high-risk, curiosity-driven research. It’s difficult to get that funding elsewhere in New Zealand.”



from the Royal Society Te Apārangi, as well as Royal Society Catalyst Funding, allowing the Otago team to pursue this high priority target. The team worked together to make the protein, test its activity and solve its high-resolution atomic structure to provide a molecular blueprint for discovering inhibitors.

“That’s the beauty of the Marsden Fund. They fund high-risk, curiosity-driven research. It’s difficult to get that funding elsewhere in New Zealand,” says Cook.

“From a clinical perspective, bd oxidase has the potential advantage that you could combine targeting it with targeting other ‘energetic’ targets in TB and rapidly cure TB,” says Kraus. “One of the other beauties of bd oxidase is that it is not found in mammalian cells so blocking it completely is not likely to cause side effects.”

That brings the discussion back to their shared holy grail - to be able to treat TB in a week or two, like any other infection.

“If we can target the two enzymes in TB that together respire with oxygen then we can potentially rapidly cure TB infections, and over time we would have the potential to eradicate TB completely from humans,” says Cook.

There is considerable international interest in this new structure and the next step is to work with organic chemists and theoretical chemists to try and locate small molecule inhibitors for this protein and eventually take it through to human studies.

Cook says there is also scope to see this work extended into tackling other bacteria which also have bd oxidase, something that could also open up new lines of research for curing other infectious diseases.

**MARK WRIGHT**

# Taking the helm

New VC sees role as adventure and privilege

Photos: Sharron Bennett

**PROFESSOR DAVID MURDOCH:** “Maintaining good connections and trust are critical to the culture of the University at any time, and we’re facing the toughest time for universities in a generation.”





# Professor David Murdoch is no stranger to adventure – and now he embarks on a big one, as the University of Otago’s new Vice-Chancellor.

**WHEN PROFESSOR** David Murdoch was appointed as the University of Otago’s new Vice-Chancellor, people were quick to offer well-intentioned advice.

“They told me that the job was a big one and that the weather in Dunedin could be inclement,” he laughs. “They weren’t telling me anything I didn’t already know.”

Murdoch’s move south from being Dean and Head of the University’s Christchurch campus is a kind of homecoming.

His mother came from a long-established Dunedin family, and Murdoch was actually born on campus at Queen Mary Maternity Hospital, which is now Hayward College. He attended Ōpoho School before his family moved to work in Christchurch.

Both parents were teachers and Murdoch believes they instilled strong values into him and his three sisters. “My father was well ahead of his time at the college where he worked, including supporting women to senior roles.”

At school Murdoch was interested in the biological sciences, and was encouraged to study medicine, which he did in Dunedin and Christchurch, graduating in 1985 with an Otago Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

He’d met his future wife Lynley Cook at Medical School and the couple decided that their medical elective could be both a learning experience and an adventure. It was to be the first of many.

Murdoch loved mountains, and Cook’s

father had been born in India, so they headed off to study in Nepal and India.

“It was my first trip overseas and our first big adventure. It’s where we started learning about how to read the place you were in, acknowledging you were just a guest and the rules might be different. Those early years were deeply formative.”

The experience gave them inspiration for their future, leading to many returns to Nepal, further qualifications in the UK and the USA, and burgeoning careers with international reach. Early exposure to the developing world’s need to counter infectious disease influenced many of Murdoch’s subsequent projects, often improving the health of nations.

“Since I was quite young, I had always been concerned about global and social injustices,” says Murdoch. “Infectious diseases had been brewing as an option as I studied Medicine, but going to Nepal and having to deal with so much preventable disease sealed it for me. We were part of national treatment programmes and witnessed the transformative nature of public health programmes.”

In between doing medical locums in the UK, Murdoch and Cook continued their adventures working in Nepal and he completed a diploma with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and a Master’s degree in Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Murdoch also befriended Oxford



**ENTRIES AND EXITS:** Otago’s new Vice-Chancellor Professor David Murdoch, with (from left) outgoing Chancellor Dr Royden Somerville QC, incoming Chancellor Stephen Higgs, and outgoing Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Helen Nicholson.

University paediatrician Andy Pollard while planning a Mount Everest expedition. They shared a world view and work ethic and a love of Nepal and mountains, together writing *The High Altitude Medicine Handbook*, which has become known as one of the best clinical reference books of its kind and a proven life-saver in the mountains.

They didn’t know it at the time, but work they would do together later was to become a life-saver for millions.

On a two-year fellowship at Duke University in North Carolina, Murdoch ran a project in Nepal to discover which infections were causing the most hospital admissions, using personal contacts to further research and solutions. “It was one of many studies that cemented my view that the best research outcomes come about through friendship, respect and true collaboration.”

By 2000 Murdoch and Cook were keen to return home to Christchurch, where he

“They told me that the job was a big one and that the weather in Dunedin could be inclement. They weren’t telling me anything I didn’t already know.”

worked with the district health board and she worked as a public health physician.

Murdoch applied for an academic position at Otago, hoping to lecture and to continue work he had started overseas. He was appointed in 2002 to lead the Pathology Department in Christchurch – much to his surprise. “I was a little anxious to start with. I never thought my first university job would be as a head of department.”

He completed a doctorate at Otago and started putting into practice some of the experiences he had had overseas. He worked with colleagues to establish the world’s first national surveillance study of Legionnaires’ disease, discovering that New Zealand had the highest reported incidence globally.

Murdoch’s growing international research reputation soon had him reunited with Oxford’s Professor Andy Pollard to identify causes of pneumonia and meningitis in children in Nepal and the

suitability of vaccine schedules.

“It directly led to major policy decisions in the country, including the introduction by the Nepalese government of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b and pneumococcal vaccines into their national immunisation programme in 2009 and 2015, respectively. This work is an absolute career highlight for me and a source of immense pride. It has had a substantial impact on child health in Nepal and helped established a new generation of young Nepali researchers.”

The work involved building strong relationships with the Ministry of Health in Nepal, the local office of the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Global Alliance of Vaccine and Immunisation (GAVI), which provides a mechanism for funding vaccines in poor countries.

It also led to an invitation to join the largest-ever study of childhood pneumonia,



funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and further adventures in advancing public health.

“We were approached by the Gates Foundation because pneumonia is the single biggest killer of under five-year-olds globally,” says Murdoch. “I was on the leadership team and we ran it out in parts of Africa and Asia for the best part of 10 years.”

One of Murdoch’s tasks was to set up diagnostic laboratories for the Pneumonia Etiology Research for Child Health (PERCH) study in seven countries in Asia and Africa.

“I travelled so much to study sites that it began to feel as if I was living in parallel worlds –one working with groups in New Zealand and the other with groups who met all over the world. I was privileged to be able to collaborate with so many amazing people from so many places.”

The foundation’s US\$41 million funding made all the difference. “We were well funded and could pull in expertise from anywhere. It just illustrates what can be done with appropriate funding and forward thinking.”

In New Zealand Murdoch and Massey University veterinarian Professor Nigel French co-founded One Health Aotearoa, investigating how human health is impacted by environmental change and animal health, as evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Murdoch is pleased to see the recent government response to One Health Aotearoa’s calls with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment announcing a \$36 million investment in an infectious diseases platform to be hosted by the University of Otago and the Institute of

Environmental Science and Research.

“This should build on what One Health Aotearoa has been working on for several years,” he says. “We need to strengthen capability in areas such as epidemiology, modelling and outbreak management, and build generic pandemic plans that are flexible enough to respond to all eventualities.

“This requires a culture change and investment so research is regarded as business-as-usual within our public health system, providing the science

Leadership Award, University of Otago, Christchurch (2020); Fellow, American Academy of Microbiology (2019); Honorary member, Holistic Health Society Nepal (2017), for outstanding service and contribution in the health sector of Nepal; Fellow, Infectious Diseases Society of America (2005); and Honorary life member, Himalayan Rescue Association, Nepal (1988).

He was made Dean of the University of Otago, Christchurch in 2016 and took up the Vice-Chancellorship early this year.

Murdoch is fully aware that he has taken

issues like infectious diseases, climate emergency, biodiversity and sustainability.

“There’s a lot of anxiety. We have to do what we need to do. I’ve been in leadership roles in crises before — earthquakes in Kathmandu and Christchurch and the mosque shootings — and so hitting the ground running is not new to me. My key role is to ensure we are prepared for coming events and keep us working together as a team.”

Murdoch is keen to set the right tone for collaboration throughout the University. “Good teamwork is essential as we tackle the challenges of the future. Maintaining good connections and trust are critical to the culture of the University at any time, and we’re facing the toughest time for universities in a generation.

“Even before COVID, the legacy of rising costs and maintaining buildings has meant having to balance the books when our funding has not kept pace with inflation. So we need to remain accountable to the population we serve and maintain good working relationships with the government.

“We also have to keep relevant in a global perspective and that means working towards being a true University of the Pacific, including building the partnership with tangata whenua and tackling sustainability and climate change. Those challenges get me excited.”

Murdoch will continue to follow his own research interests in infectious diseases and epidemiology, although now more as a mentor to younger researchers.

Murdoch and Cook are enjoying being back in Dunedin. “We have a lot of friends here and have been made very welcome. We’re loving getting out into the regions again, both to old haunts and new places we’ve never been.

“We’ve had a lot of adventures in our lives and we thought we had one more big one in us, although we had not expected it to be this. So now we see this experience as both an adventure and a privilege.”

**NIGEL ZEGA**

We’ve had a lot of adventures in our lives and we thought we had one more big one in us, although we had not expected it to be this. So now we see this experience as both an adventure and a privilege.

needed to inform policy, preparedness and best practice.”

Murdoch advised the New Zealand government on COVID-19 and was one of three international specialists invited to Oxford University to oversee clinical trials of the Astra Zeneca vaccine being developed by a team led by his friend and collaborator, Professor Andy Pollard, a world-leading expert in the field and now knighted for his work.

Murdoch’s own career accolades include the University of Otago Distinguished Research Medal (2020); Outstanding

on the top job at Otago in uncertain times. “The role is absolutely massive,” he says. “But COVID is an immediate challenge and my primary concern is staff and student welfare.

“We need to reconsider how the University delivers education and safe accommodation in light of COVID while providing students with the best University experience possible. All our staff are devoted to that idea. COVID is finally here but there is an end in sight. We are going to get through this.

“I think the University has an important role in addressing major global existential



**PROFESSOR DAVID MURDOCH**  
with his wife Lynley Cook.



# Changing Chancellor

At the same time as seeing a new Vice-Chancellor take up the executive leadership role, Otago also has a new Chancellor taking over the leadership of the University Council.

Stephen Higgs comes into the role as Otago's 20<sup>th</sup> Chancellor, taking the baton from Dr Royden Somerville QC who held the appointment from 2018.

As the *Otago Magazine* discovers, the pair share a similar story of long links with Otago as graduates and a huge enthusiasm for the University's future.

Photos: Sharron Bennett

## Outgoing Chancellor grateful for opportunity

**CO-OPTED ONTO** the University of Otago Council in 2010, departing Chancellor Dr Royden Somerville QC has enjoyed a long association with the University as a student, graduate, staff member and Council member.

"I have always been very conscious of the significant role it plays as a public university, both nationally and internationally."

Somerville is quick to acknowledge what he describes as the skilled and dedicated Council members he has served with.

"I wish to acknowledge their stewardship and constant diligence to ensure that the resources, finances and infrastructure of the University are maintained and enhanced, and that the strategic vision for the University is developed, while recognising the importance of the wellbeing of our academic and professional staff, and students."

He is also full of praise for the way the University community has tackled the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The University Council has been so proud of the extraordinary and tireless work of our academic and professional staff at all of our campuses, and of their resilience and adaptability during these challenging times. The senior leadership team has ensured that the University has continued to operate in the

face of constantly changing circumstances," he says.

"I also wish to acknowledge Professor Harlene Hayne's leadership as Vice-Chancellor of the University from 2011 to 2021. As a very experienced leader with a passion for Otago she worked assiduously and selflessly for it. She also very effectively applied her skills to promote student wellbeing," he says.

He also thanks Professor Helen Nicholson for her invaluable service as Acting Vice-Chancellor over the 10 months between Professor Hayne's departure and the appointment and arrival of Professor David Murdoch as the University's ninth Vice-Chancellor.

"I am confident that Professor Murdoch



**OUTGOING CHANCELLOR DR ROYDEN SOMERVILLE QC:** "I wish Stephen Higgs, the incoming Chancellor, all the very best. I am sure that he will find the position as rewarding and stimulating as I have."



**INCOMING CHANCELLOR STEPHEN HIGGS:** "Like all organisations, we have many exciting and important opportunities, so we have to make decisions about our key priorities – we can't do everything."

"The best advocates for our University are its staff, students and alumni. The achievements of its staff and graduates provide us with great hope for the future, and sustain the high regard in which the University is held throughout the world."

will be an inspiring and inclusive leader of the University. I wish him all the very best in this important role."

Somerville is proud of initiatives such as becoming the first New Zealand university to commit to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

During his time as Chancellor there has been a busy building programme. In 2021 alone, there was the opening of the refurbished Walsh building at the Faculty of Dentistry, the new Eccles Building, the Performing Arts Building Te Korokoro o te Tūi, and the Auckland Dental Facility.

A particular highlight was his involvement with the 2019 celebrations marking Otago's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"It was a lovely coincidence that I was serving as Chancellor during these sesquicentennial celebrations, as my great-great-grandfather, the Reverend Dr Thomas Burns, was the University's first Chancellor. I was also proud to be the first Kāi Tahu Chancellor," he says.

"I have always been very conscious of

the University's obligation to honour the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the need for the University to continue to develop an enduring partnership with Kāi Tahu."

But it is the various interactions with academic and professional staff, students and alumni that Somerville has particularly enjoyed.

"The best advocates for our University are its staff, students and alumni. The achievements of its staff and graduates provide us with great hope for the future, and sustain the high regard in which the University is held throughout the world," he says.

"I wish Stephen Higgs, the incoming Chancellor, all the very best. I am sure that he will find the position as rewarding and stimulating as I have."

In recognition of Somerville's service, the University conferred on him the special degree of Honorary Doctor of Laws at the first of the recent May graduation ceremonies.



“David knows the institution well, and I’ve had nine years on the Council. The senior leadership team alongside him, and the Council alongside me, have significant institutional knowledge, great capability and a shared passion for the University of Otago.”

### Otago welcomes a new Chancellor

Since graduating with a Commerce degree “a long time ago” Otago’s 20<sup>th</sup> Chancellor, Stephen Higgs, has maintained strong links with the University.

After lecturing in tax, serving on an advisory board for the Business School and acting as a tax advisor for the University, he joined the Council about nine years ago.

“It’s a long association and one I have always enjoyed,” he says. “For the last 20 years I have been in governance roles on various boards, so those are the skills I bring now, along with a commercial and financial background.”

Higgs says he comes into the role at an interesting time, but instead of talking about challenges he prefers terms such as issues and priorities.

“Like all organisations, we have many exciting and important opportunities, so we have to make decisions about our key priorities – we can’t do everything,” he says.

“We will be a bit financially constrained for a period with limited international students, constrained funding and rising

costs, so we are going to need to prioritise where we choose to invest or spend.”

In the near term, the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape will be a factor, something he says the senior leadership team has done a fantastic job with.

Higgs enters his new role at the same time as a new Vice-Chancellor comes on board, and he believes Professor David Murdoch’s 20-year association with the University will smooth the way.

“David knows the institution well, and I’ve had nine years on the Council. The senior leadership team alongside him, and the Council alongside me, have significant institutional knowledge, great capability and a shared passion for the University of Otago. I know it will be a very positive relationship.”

Higgs acknowledges the efforts of previous Chancellor Dr Royden Somerville QC and Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Helen Nicholson who he says have served the University and the wider community superbly.

Looking ahead, one of the key drivers will be the *Vision 2040* document, which, after widespread consultation, provides a comprehensive view of what the University should look like, and a steer on where some of its priorities should sit.

He says a major plank for *Vision 2040* is the University’s relationship with Iwi and the desire to genuinely be a Treaty-led organisation at both a governance and operational level.

“Sustainability is another key plank. That’s about what we teach, that’s about our research, and it’s about the University itself achieving carbon zero by 2030. We have the expertise within the University to help us achieve that goal and it will require substantial commitment in time and money.”

Higgs says as Chancellor he looks forward to working closely with the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the Council, and the wider ambassadorial role with the community, staff, students and alumni.

**MARK WRIGHT**

# Whale watch

Investigating the Parāoa of the South Pacific



Otago researchers are this year expanding a long-running project on Kaikōura parāoa (sperm whales) to include parāoa populations found in Otago and Northland. With fieldwork already underway, the *Otago Magazine* takes a look at the mahi.

Photo: Toby Dickson



**AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND'S**

unique marine topography, which includes deep submarine canyons and steep continental slopes, makes it one of the few places in the world where parāoa (sperm whales) can be seen close to the coast.

Parāoa are a taonga species that hold cultural significance for Māori and Pacific peoples across Te Moana nui a Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean), and as large, apex predators, they also fill an important role in the marine ecosystem.

Since 1990, Otago's Marine Megafauna Research Group has been researching the population of parāoa at Kaikōura, and the study is now one of the world's longest-running studies on cetaceans.

Now this research group, led by Dr Will Rayment of the Department of Marine Science, is expanding this mahi with

“This data will hopefully allow us to get a better sense of the whakapapa of the individual whales in the study, and to understand questions around “Nō hea rātou?” – where are the whales in Aotearoa coming from – and who else in the Pacific are their whanaunga?”

funding from the new Centre of Research Excellence, Coastal People: Southern Skies, hosted at the University of Otago.

Over the next three years, the Marine Megafauna Research Group will build on the proven research methods, knowledge and relationships made through their mahi in Kaikōura, to investigate the ecology, movements and conservation status of

parāoa across other parts of Aotearoa.

“We will take what we have learned and refined at Kaikōura and apply this to two other parāoa populations, in Otago and Northland, where the whales have been consistently seen in recent years,” Rayment says.

“Undertaking systematic surveys in these new locations will enable a more

comprehensive outlook on the status of parāoa in Aotearoa, and also help grow knowledge of the connectivity of parāoa around the motu (country), as well as the wider Pacific region.”

Due to ease of access, research to date has focused on the population of parāoa visiting the Kaikōura Canyon, an extremely productive deep-sea habitat and an important foraging ground for male sperm whales.

Assistant Research Fellow for the new project, Dr Marta Guerra, has been involved with the Kaikōura research for almost 10 years, including her PhD thesis that focused on the foraging ecology of parāoa.

“It didn't take long to become fascinated by these creatures, which are a key part of the submarine canyon ecosystem, and strongly entwined with the human history and lifestyle of Kaikōura,” Guerra says.

“Even over these 10 years, however, which is not that long considering that sperm whales live for more than 50 or 60 years, we have seen some substantial changes in their population, and it has become clear how fluctuations in their abundance can really impact whale-watching tourism in the area.”

Guerra says the number of parāoa seen at Kaikōura is declining, and possible drivers could include climate-mediated changes in local oceanographic conditions, or impacts on other parts of the whales' range such as their presumed migratory destinations to the north of New Zealand.

“There are still many questions about their population that remain unanswered, and while Kaikōura is certainly an important hotspot for these animals, they are wide ranging nomads who spend much of their time in other regions around the deep moana, following movements which are yet unknown to us.”

The new project will allow the opportunity, for the first time in Aotearoa, to study female and young sperm whales who generally inhabit warmer waters. To assess the movements of individuals in the new sampling locations, the research team will utilise techniques including photo-

identification and comparisons of acoustic dialects, in addition to applying genetic methods using state-of-the-art sequencing and genotyping techniques.

Overseeing the genetic analysis of the project is Associate Investigator Dr Alana Alexander (Ngāpuhi: Te Hikutu, Pākehā), a Research Fellow based in the Department of Anatomy.

Alexander explains sequencing technologies have advanced significantly over the past decade, and that it's now possible to analyse both maternal and paternal genetic markers spread right across the genome, obtained from sloughed skin samples the whales shed naturally as they swim.

“This data will hopefully allow us to get a better sense of the whakapapa of the individual whales in the study, and to understand questions around “Nō hea rātou?” – where are the whales in Aotearoa

coming from – and who else in the Pacific are their whanaunga (relations)?”

Piecing together such connections sits at the core of the project, and Alexander explains her interest in the project also draws parallels to our own existence. “Much like our tūpuna, parāoa use the moana as a highway to get around. And connections between parāoa in Aotearoa and elsewhere reflect the connections we as humans have in Aotearoa with our Pacific whānau.”

“At the same time, human activity is making the ocean a more difficult place for parāoa and other marine life. So having a greater understanding of where our whales are coming from, and how they are related to each other, will help us understand the threats they face here and on their way to our shores, and help facilitate tiaki (protection) to mitigate these threats.”

Historical and cultural relationships with parāoa will also be central to the expanded research project, which will combine contemporary research and traditional ecological knowledge.

“Our aim is to empower and learn from communities that have important relationships with parāoa, including hearing from tohunga (experts) to better acknowledge other forms of knowledge regarding these whales,” Rayment says.

“By working with communities to interweave mātauranga (Māori knowledge) and Pacific traditional ecological knowledge with insights from this study, we will gain a greater understanding of parāoa and the impacts they are facing, so that traditionally-important connections may persist and thrive into the future.”

Rayment adds that acknowledging the relationships coastal communities have with parāoa will help to promote the physical and spiritual health of those people and their connectedness with te taiao (the environment).

Research collaborations will continue with Whalewatch Kaikōura and the New Zealand Whale & Dolphin Trust, and in Northland new surveys will be undertaken in collaboration with the Far Out Ocean

“With so many opportunities for research and community engagement, I'm really excited by the potential of this project for making a real difference to this taonga species and the communities parāoa are closely connected to.”



**DR WILL RAYMENT AND THE RESEARCH TEAM** (from left) Dr Alana Alexander, Stella Simpson, Tamlyn Somerford and Dr Marta Guerra. Absent: Whitney Steidl.

Photo: Alan Dove



Research Collective. The system of submarine canyons incising the Otago shelf is now regarded as reliable year-round habitat for parāoa, and data collection will be conducted using the University of Otago’s research vessels.

It is intended that research outputs will also support the sustainability of Kaikōura’s whale-watching industry, as well as inform future marine policy in Aotearoa. The study also coincides with the upcoming review on the moratorium on whale-watch permits administered by the Department of Conservation.

The Centre of Research Excellence Coastal People: Southern Skies, led by co-Directors Professor Chris Hepburn and Associate Professor Anne-Marie Jackson, was formally established in 2021.

The Centre’s mission is to connect, understand and restore coastal ecosystems through transformative research and local action, with mauri ora (flourishing wellness) of coastal communities guiding its overall vision.

Jackson acknowledges this parāoa project is a great example of the aspirations of the Centre and is timely given the release and recommendations of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report.

“This project is leading the way because it integrates both marine and wellbeing components within its research programme, and provides opportunities for the researchers to engage with indigenous communities to facilitate knowledge exchange and to make a real difference.”

Rayment says the parāoa research is a natural fit for the Centre with its concerns for changing climate, oceanic conditions and connected communities.

“To be given this fantastic opportunity and be supported by the Centre in an inclusive and collaborative process has been really positive,” says Rayment.

“With so many opportunities for research and community engagement, I’m really excited by the potential of this project for making a real difference to this taonga species and the communities parāoa are closely connected to.”

GUY FREDERICK

# Get involved

South Pacific Sperm Whales is a citizen science initiative seeking to collect sightings and information about parāoa (sperm whales) around Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. This initiative is part of the research project “Parāoa of the South Pacific” based at the University of Otago, which aims to better understand the connections of sperm whales around Aotearoa and its Pacific neighbours, as well as the impacts facing the species in a rapidly changing ocean. Users can log any parāoa sightings by uploading a photo, time and location to iNaturalist at the following link:

[inaturalist.org/projects/south-pacific-sperm-whales](https://inaturalist.org/projects/south-pacific-sperm-whales)

A PARĀOA AT KAIKŌURA.  
Photo: Will Rayment



Four aspiring artists are settling into a dream year at the University of Otago – taking up Six60 scholarships and calling the iconic flat at 660 Castle Street home.



**DISBELIEF, ELATION AND GRATITUDE.** And a lot of jumping up and down. That pretty much sums up how the inaugural Six60 Scholarship winners – Teone Hotu, Emily Kerr-Bell, TJ Zimba and Samuel Leaper – reacted when they were told on a video call with the famous Kiwi band that their applications had been successful.

As Kerr-Bell says: “I was a mess. I couldn’t believe it . . . It’s an insane opportunity and there’s nothing else I’d really rather be doing that I can think of at all in life at the moment. It feel very blessed to be where I am.”

The scholarships were launched after the band purchased their iconic 660 Castle Street property last year, and the four students moved in at the start of the University year. The scholarships include a \$10,000 rent rebate, as well as mentoring from the band and access to the University’s new recording studios.

While all are passionate about their music, only two, Kerr-Bell and Leaper, are studying for music-related degrees. Zimba is studying for a Bachelor of Physiotherapy and Hotu a Bachelor of Science.

They’re also focused on different areas of music which, as Leaper says, means “no-one is stepping on anyone’s toes.

“The scholarship is such an amazing way to meet people who really have lived through it. It’s so unique, to have people that are willing to walk that road with you. It’s like career development from people who are such high calibre.”

I feel we’ll all help each other a lot with different things. It should be a really collaborative year”.

They all agree that the scholarship is a fantastic and rare opportunity to learn from the best in the business.

“The scholarship is such an amazing way to meet people who really have lived through it,” says Kerr-Bell. “It’s so unique, to have people that are willing to walk that road with you. It’s like career development from people who are such high calibre.”

Mentoring from the band could help with everything from how to navigate the industry, pick a good manager and compose music, to how to do shows and

have a stage presence.

They had their first call with the band’s manager in early March, and the band is planning to come to Dunedin in June to work with them in person.

“We are really proud of how the students have settled into the academic year, given the unsettling nature of Omicron in the community,” says Deputy-Vice-Chancellor External Engagement, Professor Tony Ballantyne.

“We are looking forward to supporting them on their academic and musical paths this year and are excited about what the future holds for each of them.”

**MARGIE CLARK**



**SAMUEL LEAPER:** “The dream is to have a future performing, doing what the boys in Six60 do.”

## Samuel Leaper

“I started playing when I was six on various instruments. I’ve tried to be involved with music as much as possible, through my whole life saying yes to a whole range of opportunities.”

At the moment, Leaper, who is from Dunedin, is working with his band Black-Sale House (the former home of the music department at Otago) writing songs and finding gigs.

“The dream is to have a future performing, doing what the boys in Six60 do.”

He says gaining the scholarship has been a really validating experience. “With music sometimes it’s hard to see if it’s all worthwhile but it was definitely like a big moment of ‘oh this is happening, this is something I’ve worked really hard for’ and I feel really grateful for that.”



**TJ ZIMBA:** “I want to change music, put out singles that have no drums but they still knock, or put out crazy rock 'n' roll songs.”



**TEONE HOTU:** “My mum and dad started working for Māori radio 30 years ago when it was a brand new thing . . . But today heaps of performing artists, including Six60, have released bilingual music.”

## TJ Zimba

TJ, who has lived in Dunedin and Australia and was a finalist in the TV show Popstars last year, has been involved with music since he was four or five, starting with singing and playing in church. He moved to New Zealand from Zimbabwe in 2004.

“I want to change music, put out singles that have no drums but they still knock, or put out crazy rock ‘n’ roll songs.”

Like Hotu, Zimba also believes music and healing are synonymous. “I want to bring those two things together. I want to work my way into making sure that what I do helps people.”

He thinks the mentoring the group will receive from the scholarship will help develop connections, skills and tools, which can then help them take their music from “bedroom-producer level to industry standard”.

It’s been hard balancing his physiotherapy degree and his music, but he’s making it work. “The cool thing is they [the band] really understand that.”

## Teone Hotu

“Basically my entire upbringing was fully immersed in everything music-related. All my whānau were in bands.”

Hotu, who is of Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Maniapoto descent, grew up in Porirua, surrounded by music, kapa haka and performing arts. He plays quite a few instruments but mainly piano and guitar.

One of his key goals is to help the revitalisation of te reo Māori through music.

“My mum and dad started working for Māori radio 30 years ago when it was a brand new thing . . . Prior to that you would barely hear New Zealand music on mainstream radio, and you definitely wouldn’t hear any te reo Māori music on air. But today heaps of performing artists, including Six60, have released bilingual music.”

Hotu also believes music can be a powerful way of healing: “I remember when my Koro was in hospital after a major stroke, the one thing that really uplifted him was when me and my sister came in and sung him a couple of songs. It just shows you the difference that music can make. It can heal in ways that other things can’t.”



**EMILY KERR-BELL:** “It’s an insane opportunity and there’s nothing else I’d really rather be doing that I can think of at all in life at the moment.”

## Emily Kerr-Bell

‘I’ve always had a very strong interest in and love for performing, particularly singing.”

A vocalist in her newly-formed band Emily Alice, Emily, who is of Ngāpuhi descent, says a lot of her singing development was through music theatre in Dunedin, but her main goal now is contemporary voice, working with her band and putting out new music.

“We’re just continuing to write music and when COVID dies down start getting some gigs, a bit more live activity, and then through the scholarship definitely continuing to record music.”

She says despite COVID the year has got off to a good start. “We’re really lucky to be healthy and so well supported in what we’re doing at the moment, because for a lot of artists this is a really, really hard time.”



# Economic challenges and opportunities for our future

Otago economist Dr Murat Üngör explains the impacts of COVID-19 on the local and global economy, and takes a look at the implications for New Zealanders.

**THE CORONAVIRUS FIRST** appeared in China in late 2019, just a few weeks before it made its way to the rest of the world. New Zealand's Ministry of Health confirmed the first case in the country on 28 February 2020. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic.

The pandemic, which has reached almost every country in the world, and shutdown measures to contain it plunged the global economy into a severe contraction. The global economy shrank by 3.4 per cent, and the volume of world merchandise trade (average of exports and imports) contracted by 5.3 per cent in 2020. As of 1 May 2022, over 500 million confirmed cases and over six million deaths have been reported globally.

The global economy is trying to come back as almost two-thirds of the world

population have received a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

On the economic front, New Zealand faces several short-run challenges and medium- to long-term concerns.

Life is becoming much more expensive in New Zealand and in many other countries as inflation has risen worldwide. Global supply-chain disruptions, rising energy and petrol prices, labour and material shortages in the construction industry, and increasing costs of raw materials put pressure on inflation in New Zealand. That combination of higher food prices and housing rents impact those on low incomes and increases in mortgage rates impact homeowners.

Inflation is going to be with us for a while, and it is not the only problem we face.

Global public debt has surged with the pandemic. Governments around the

world have been spending huge amounts to support households and businesses. In March 2020, the New Zealand Government outlined a \$12.1 billion package to support New Zealanders, which was expanded later. In March 2021 President Biden signed the \$US1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act.

These much-needed fiscal stimulus and relief packages to protect health and wellbeing today are creating liabilities for tomorrow, with long-term consequences for the future of young generations.

We should also be aware of the inequality in opportunities for future generations.

One example is the wellbeing of our children. Experiences during childhood are critical for cognitive development. Child poverty statistics show measures trending downwards over the past three years. The statistics for Māori and Pasifika, however, are particularly alarming. One in five Māori children and one in four Pasifika children meet the criteria for material hardship. These are non-negligible figures. It is important for all of us to understand the state of economic inclusion in our communities.

Another concern for the future is the demographic profile of the population.

Population ageing has important policy implications for health and social welfare systems, income distribution and immigration. One important statistic for

characterising population ageing is the old-age dependency ratio – the number of individuals aged 65+ per 100 people of working age, defined as those aged 20-64 – which is rising around the world.

According to the estimates of the United Nations, the demographically oldest country is Japan, with a dependency ratio equal to 57 in 2020. The corresponding figures are 31 and 32 for Australia and New Zealand, respectively. The ratio is projected to reach 51 per cent by 2055, when there will be fewer than two working-age adults for each elderly person in New Zealand.

Phased-in retirement can be a plausible solution as life expectancy continues to increase. Older employees can choose to work fewer hours and still generate value to organisations with their experience and knowledge.

Another headwind for the future of New Zealand is low productivity.

Economic research has shown us that one of the main reasons why standard of living across countries varies is because productivity varies across countries. Over the last 40 years, New Zealand's productivity growth has been below that of its peers.

By improving productivity, living standards can be raised as well as improving infrastructure, health and education

systems. We should invest in productivity-enhancing sectors and economic activities through technology innovation and adoption of better technology.

The notion of business had already changed dramatically before the global pandemic.

Developments in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, nanotechnology, automated factories and other new technologies (such as quantum computation and communication technologies) have already started to transform business models all over the world. New Zealand should not miss these opportunities.

Productivity growth can also have positive impacts on our wellbeing by allowing us to work less or mitigating harm to the natural environment.

New Zealand is an open economy with significant trade and financial links with other countries.

Multilateralism has been an essential component of New Zealand's international trade policy. In a world-first for any developed country, New Zealand entered into a free trade agreement with China in 2008. China has become New Zealand's top commodity export destination in recent years.

While China will continue to be a major trading partner, it is important for

New Zealand to develop new bilateral and multilateral agreements, and to improve its current trade agreements with other countries. Recent signing of the NZ-UK free trade agreement is encouraging.

Multilateralism and global cooperation are particularly important for New Zealand considering the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting sanctions which raise concerns about global economic and political affairs.

There are significant risks to New Zealand's economic prospects as COVID-19 is still with us, the cost of living keeps increasing, and the global economic uncertainty accelerates.

Do young New Zealanders dealing with loans or preparing to enter the workforce think they should be concerned about their financial future? Is it still possible to fulfil the dream of buying a house and starting a family?

There are no easy answers for such questions. Yet we should not be pessimistic.

Young Kiwis want a better future and a better world. At the University of Otago, we are committed to working closely with our students to help them shape the future.

My advice? The most valuable asset you have is you, your human capital. Have a vision for yourself and invest in yourself every day.



**ECONOMIST DR MURAT ÜNGÖR:** "These much-needed fiscal stimulus and relief packages to protect health and wellbeing today are creating liabilities for tomorrow, with long-term consequences for the future of young generations."

Photo: Alan Dove



# Anna Marsh

From exchange student to international CEO

**ANNA MARSH ATTRIBUTES HER SUCCESS TO:** “Hard work, determination, being results oriented, putting my hand up when opportunities arose, some great people above me who trained me and believed in me, and I think there is always an element of luck.”



Anna Marsh went to France as a University of Otago exchange student and ended up running one of Europe’s largest media companies.

**GROWING UP IN** Castor Bay on Auckland’s North Shore, Anna Marsh gained a taste for business while hanging out with her parents in her father’s insurance company offices in Auckland.

“I spent a lot of time in his offices with his staff, doing filing and things after school, on the weekend and during the school holidays,” Marsh recalls. “My Mum worked in the company with him as well.”

When it came to a more formal business education, Marsh left home at the age of 17 to study commerce at Otago.

“I always dreamed of going to Otago. I had heard great things about it from friends of the family. I was fascinated by the South Island. And obviously, Otago University has an excellent reputation in business and science. So, I was pulled to Otago, like a magnet.”

Marsh spent her first year living in Hayward College, and then went flatting with a group made up of new friends and old friends from high school.

“I quite liked living on campus. In Auckland, I would have had to live at home. The first week, I remember feeling a sense of liberty. Leaving your childhood behind and embarking on a new era, along with the weight of responsibility in terms of the decisions you start making that shape your future.”

Marsh spent four years studying at the Dunedin campus, from 1997 to 2000, graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, and undertaking other studies along the way, including papers in French, which she had also learned at high school.

She had already become enamoured with French culture, particularly French literature

and film. “At high school, I would devour French movies from the local video shop with some of my friends. My dream was to live and work in Paris.”

When an opportunity arose to study commerce in Paris – through an Otago Business School student exchange programme – she jumped at the chance. “I really fell into the honey pot: so lucky.” She was simultaneously awarded a John Waddell Hayward Scholarship in Commerce towards her costs.

Marsh spent 2001 studying at one of the most prestigious business schools in France: HEC Paris. “It was like Otago. We all lived on campus. I pursued my studies in management, and I dabbled in marketing, economics and finance. Some of the courses were in French and some in English, and we worked on projects not only with French students but also with students from all around Europe, which was incredibly stimulating.”

Marsh says her education at Otago set her up well for studies at the business school.

“I was quite concerned as to whether I would be up to the French standard but, in following some of the core subjects at the business school, I found that I was able to comfortably slip into the lessons at the level required,” Marsh says. “In fact, the professors commended three of us from Otago University who had been lucky enough to have places in that business school, on our level of education and the grades we were able to achieve.”

Marsh has some advice for students contemplating similar exchange programmes today. “If the opportunity arises, I would say, ‘Don’t hesitate.’”



Instead of returning to New Zealand at the end of her studies, Marsh opted to stay in Paris and pursue her dreams. “To work in international business out of Paris was definitely a goal, and I quickly worked out that I wanted to work in film in Paris.”

During her year at the business school, Marsh had embarked on an internship at a French television production company, Tele Images Productions, and ended up working for the company for three years, selling children’s television animation, documentaries and live-action programmes to the world.

From there, she progressed to three years as the international sales manager for a group of mass media companies in France: TF1.

“Starting out in TV was a great learning curve, but TF1 was a bigger company and quite a prestigious company to be courted by, and the job covered cinema as well as television.”

She then joined a French film and television production and distribution company, Studiocanal, in 2008. Marsh rose steadily through the ranks over the next decade: vice-president of international sales, head of international distribution strategy, executive vice-president of international distribution, and managing director of Studiocanal in the United Kingdom.

In December 2019, the girl from Castor Bay – young, female and foreign



ANNA MARSH (left) with colleagues at the César Awards.

– was appointed Studiocanal’s chief executive officer.

Marsh attributes her rise to several factors. “Hard work, determination, being results oriented, putting my hand up when opportunities arose, some great people above me who trained me and believed in me, and I think there is always an element of luck.”

She notes that men still dominate the top jobs in the entertainment industry but women are increasingly being recognised. “I think we have to support each other, definitely. Women need to give other women opportunities and allow them to pursue those opportunities through talent and hard work.”

A few facts and figures will readily indicate Studiocanal’s size and significance. Marsh heads a company that employs about 450 people across

four continents, including an office in Marsh’s home town of Auckland. It owns or part-owns nine production companies, mainly in Europe. It invests about \$NZ560 million each year in film and television productions, and grosses about \$NZ800 million in annual revenue.

Annually, the company finances and produces more than 30 films and distributes 50 films. It also distributes more than 1,000 hours of television and library content each year. The output is in multiple languages: French, German, Italian, Spanish, Polish and English.

The library content comes from one of the largest and most prestigious film libraries in the world, currently comprising about 6,500 titles, which Studiocanal has acquired through taking over or merging with studio film libraries. It includes classic movies such as *The Graduate* and iconic television series such as *The Avengers*.

If the name Studiocanal is unfamiliar to many New Zealanders, the output certainly won’t be. The movies it has produced include blockbusters such as *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *The Tourist*. Throw in popular movies such as *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, and the multi-award-winning *Paddington* movies. Notable television series seen on New Zealand screens recently include *Years and Years*.

Through Studiocanal New Zealand, the company has also been involved with the local distribution of movies such as *Six60: Till the Lights Go Out*, featuring

the Dunedin band that recently bought the former student flat where the band was formed – at 660 Castle Street – and set up performing arts scholarships in association with the University of Otago, that include living in the flat (see pages 25-27).

For Marsh, the job literally is a dream come true. “There is so much I love about my job. The immense pride of leading such a dynamic company where the people are so talented and so passionate, and creating content that is of the highest commercial quality and seen by audiences around the world.

“Also, making films and TV series that will be around for a long time. It’s part of the heritage of cinema. We are the caretakers of a significant part of the world’s cinematic history through our library, but we are also creating the classics of tomorrow with our

new productions that will hopefully resonate for generations to come.”

What does Marsh miss most about New Zealand? “My family, obviously.” She says that the COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately put a temporary stop to her annual Christmas visits back home to Auckland.

On top of running a global media empire, Marsh, and her French/Dutch husband, have 10-year-old twins – Amélia and Valentin – to raise. Marsh says that balancing work and family life can be a bit frantic.

“It’s definitely a juggle. Long hours, but I always carve out time for the family – drop the kids off at school, carve out time for dinner and bedtime – before I connect again with work later in the evening. That, and also my husband does a lot, so I am very lucky. He had his own business but now he is focused on the family.”

Marsh reflects that her University of Otago education was a great foundation for her subsequent career. “We had been well trained, with excellent skills in analytics and critical thinking, and quite an open-minded approach to education and a worldly perspective as well at Otago.

“It also taught us to set very high standards and push ourselves to excel in everything we undertook. Not only excelling academically, but also enjoying life, whether it be in our studies or the extra-curricular activities we were encouraged to do. That holistic approach to life that we learned on campus as Otago students set me up incredibly well. I think, without that experience, I wouldn’t be where I am today, in so many ways.”

IAN DOUGHERTY

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ANNA MARSH with her husband Maxime Bideau and 10-year-old twins Valentin and Amélia.



# Cancer inequities

**With Māori much more likely to die from lung cancer than non-Māori, University of Otago researchers are working across a range of disciplines to change that.**

Using \$6.2 million in equitable cancer outcomes research funding from the Health Research Council (HRC), Te Aho o Te Kahu, the Cancer Control Agency and the Ministry of Health, the Otago group is looking to understand the mechanisms behind these inequities, as well as develop screening programmes and a groundbreaking molecular test to improve outcomes.

Otago senior Māori health researcher Professor Sue Crengle (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha) has received \$1.9 million to work alongside the Waitematā and Auckland DHBs to develop and test a lung cancer screening programme using low dose CT scans.

“Māori are about three times more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer and the mortality inequities are even higher,” says Crengle.

Survival rates are also low, partly because lung cancer is often diagnosed when it’s quite late, reducing treatment options.

“Using a CT scan allows us to identify more cancers and potential cancers than using chest x-rays. We know from international research that screening with low dose CT scans reduces lung cancer mortality by 20-26 per cent.”

They will test the risk prediction algorithm used in lung cancer screening to ensure that it performs well in the New Zealand context.

At the same time, Associate Professor Aniruddha Chatterjee (Pathology) and his colleagues have received \$1.2 million to develop a blood test-based screening tool to make early detection of lung cancer more widely available, improving equity and outcomes.

Chatterjee says the test uses what is known as DNA methylation or epigenetics.

“It is the instruction manual, if you like, to our DNA, telling it how it will function. Broadly speaking, in a cancer cell those instructions go wrong.”

When someone has cancer, those cells shed DNA into the blood and his team is developing techniques to analyse the DNA methylation found in the blood, to detect changes that indicate tumour DNA.

“A big advantage is that we can collect blood in a specialised tube that is suitable for long-term storage. This would be really helpful in remote rural communities where access to specialised services is more difficult.”

Meanwhile, Māori epidemiologist Associate Professor Jason Gurney (Ngāpuhi) from the University of Otago, Wellington, and his team are wanting to understand why Māori are around 30 per cent more likely to die from lung cancer.

“Just over 300 Māori die each year of lung cancer – about the same as the next six cancers combined – making it by far the most common cause of cancer death.

“It’s an enormous issue and the bad news is that the inequity of survival between Māori and non-Māori basically hasn’t shifted in two to three decades.”

Gurney and his team have received \$800,000 to examine these differences, looking right across the cancer spectrum, from diagnosis to treatments such as surgery and radiation therapy.

“We want to understand where the most important disparities in care access are happening, to inform actions that dismantle these disparities.”



Clockwise from top left: **PROFESSOR SUE CRENGLE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANIRUDDHA CHATTERJEE AND DR JASON GURNEY (left):** “Māori are about three times more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer and the mortality inequities are even higher.”

# Bringing back hope

**Dr Wiebke Finkler (Marketing) is breaking the “doom and gloom” narrative around climate change and sustainability and bringing hope back into conversations about our world.**

Her book *The Science of Hope*, published late last year, offers an empowering story of hope – showing the positive impact of conservation efforts and humans’ desire to connect with animals, alongside stunning images by leading wildlife photographers.

A finalist in the Ecology and Environment category of the Foreword INDIES Book Awards, and featured in the Scholastic Book Club catalogue, Finkler says she wanted to inspire children, teachers and everyday people by offering practical solutions and strategies for positive change.

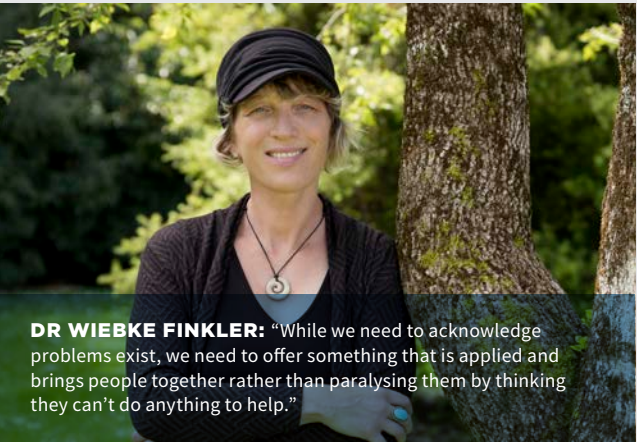
“While we need to acknowledge problems exist, we need to offer something that is applied and brings people together rather than paralysing them by thinking they can’t do anything to help,” she says.

“We can learn from other people’s stories and be inspired to find practical solutions. They may not be ‘perfect solutions’ from a scientific perspective but they are doable.”

Finkler, who is also a marine biologist, filmmaker and science communicator based in the Department of Marketing, has also established the Visual Research Lab, focused on creative marketing for positive change. The lab has three main research areas – visual campaigns for positive social, sustainable and conservation change;

storytelling using 360° video, music and ambisonic sound; and science marketing.

“I’m particularly interested in how we use video and other visual campaigns to bring about social change. We have various PhD projects on the go, including one about keeping dogs on leads to protect sealions and penguins.”



**DR WIEBKE FINKLER:** “While we need to acknowledge problems exist, we need to offer something that is applied and brings people together rather than paralysing them by thinking they can’t do anything to help.”

# Examining ageing

**A University of Otago, Christchurch, researcher is one step closer to unlocking the secrets of the ageing process after being awarded a Te Pūtea Rangahau Marsden Fund Grant.**

Professor Mark Hampton (Pathology and Biomedical Science) and his team will use the funding to investigate what happens in cells as people age – in particular the red blood cells responsible for transporting oxygen around the body.

“Ageing is a major risk factor for many human diseases, but there is limited information on what is happening inside our cells as we begin to age,” says Hampton.

“Some of the oxygen red blood cells carry is converted into hydrogen peroxide, which places these cells under oxidative stress. We’ve observed significant variation in how quickly red blood cells from different people recover after being challenged with hydrogen peroxide. The preliminary data also hints at an association between the speed of response and a person’s age.”

Hampton and his team, including Associate Professor Liz Ledgerwood (Biochemistry), hope to reveal the critical factors that determine how quickly red blood cells respond to stress, and why this differs from person to person.

“The response is possibly related to the health of the stem cells that make billions of new red blood cells each day. Stem cells

replenish all the different cells in our body, therefore red blood cells might be providing a window on what is happening in other less accessible parts of our body as we age.”



**PROFESSOR MARK HAMPTON:** “Ageing is a major risk factor for many human diseases, but there is limited information on what is happening inside our cells as we begin to age.”

Photo: Neil Macbeth



# Volcano scientist supports community with knowledge

**In January this year, the Kingdom of Tonga’s Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha’apai volcano erupted, generating an ash plume and tsunami that together had a devastating impact on Tonga’s coastal communities.**

Dr Marco Brenna (Geology) was a post-doctoral researcher when he visited the volcano in 2015 with Professor Shane Cronin from the University of Auckland.

The visit followed a period of volcanic activity resulting in the creation of a new volcanic cone connecting the two pre-existing islands of Hunga-Tonga and Hunga-Ha’apai, and was the first access by researchers to study the volcano’s geology.

The team spent five days undertaking fieldwork which, among other outputs, illustrated the evolutionary growth of the volcano from a lava cone to post-caldera activity over the last >2000 years.

Following the January 2022 eruption, Dr Brenna was a key spokesperson for local and international media, and he also met with Dunedin’s Tongan Community to share his research and knowledge of the volcano to help them better understand the science of the volcanic activity and its impacts.

Dr Brenna continues to be involved with ongoing research from the recent eruption alongside Professor Cronin who has obtained ash for analysis. By looking at shape and composition of the ash, the researchers are able to interpret the mechanisms of the eruption,

from the deeper magmatic drivers to the shallower explosive processes.

“The more we learn about this eruption, the more it shows itself as extraordinary, and it is by pure luck and good fortune that the casualty count was that low.”



**DR MARCO BRENNa WITH THE PRESIDENT OF DUNEDIN’S TONGAN COMMUNITY, PALANITE TAUNGAPEAU:**  
“The more we learn about this eruption, the more it shows itself as extraordinary, and it is by pure luck and good fortune that the casualty count was that low.”

# A brand a minute

**Children are exposed to a ‘brand a minute’ is one of the stark takeaways from research led by Associate Professor Leah Watkins (Marketing).**

Drawing on data generated by a Public Health, Wellington, designed study in which 90 children aged 11-13 wore cameras for two days, Watkins’ team found children were exposed to 554 brands over a 10-hour day, ranging from brand labels and product packaging to signage.

“One of the things that really surprised us was the sheer amount they are seeing,” says Watkins.

“We know marketing messages normalise pro-consumption values and ideas, such as being able to meet our needs for friendship and belonging through consumption. So, regardless of what products they were seeing, the concern was just how pervasive marketing messaging is in their environment.”

Children also saw far more unhealthy marketing, compared to pro-social and healthy food messages.

The United Nations and WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commission have made calls for marketing-free spaces for children and to ensure more pro-social messaging to counteract pro-consumption messaging. Watkins hopes the study’s objective picture of children’s marketing environment will stimulate important discussion about

policies needed to achieve this for the next generation.

She says children actually saw the most advertising in school (43 per cent), so they will delve into that in a follow-up study.

More commercialisation is creeping into New Zealand schools through programmes that come with free branded merchandise, she says, with many lower decile schools reliant on offers from commercial entities to provide resources or deliver programmes.



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LEAH WATKINS:**  
“...regardless of what products they were seeing, the concern was just how pervasive marketing messaging is in their environment.”

# Donation supports bipolar research

**A project led by a team at the University of Otago, Christchurch, has been chosen as the recipient of a generous family donation to support research into bipolar disorder – a lifelong mental illness affecting one in 20 New Zealanders, marked by depressive and manic episodes.**

Professor Richard Porter and his team at Christchurch’s Department of Psychological Medicine, will receive \$100,000 annually over five years from the newly-established Sue Bradford Memorial Fund.

The generous fund has been set up through the Māia Health Foundation by Christchurch resident Ian Bradford and family, in memory of their late wife and mother Sue, who suffered from bipolar disorder for several decades.

“This donation will give our unit, including researchers and staff on campus and from the CDHB’s Specialist Mental Health Service, the ability to continue our ongoing work into this extremely challenging and important area, which has the potential to relieve suffering for so many battling this long-term and debilitating illness,” says Porter.

The team’s work focuses on developing new, practical, psychological therapies to be administered alongside medications to improve mood stability, cognitive and general functioning.

They also plan to further examine the long-term cognitive impairments which mood disorders often cause, such as difficulties

in memory and planning, and expand research into helping patients regulate their circadian rhythms.

The Bradford family’s vision is for their \$500,000 gift to act as a catalyst for others to donate to the Fund, to enable continuing research and support for patients with bipolar disorder and their families.



**PROFESSOR RICHARD PORTER:** “This donation will give our unit, including researchers and staff on campus and from the CDHB’s Specialist Mental Health Service, the ability to continue our ongoing work into this extremely challenging and important area.”

Photo: Neil Macbeth

# Māori views on vaccination

**University of Otago postgraduate student Grace Davies (Ngāti Toarangatira, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Koata) has been awarded a Health Research Council scholarship to investigate Māori attitudes towards vaccination.**

She decided on her Master’s research topic while working on the COVID-19 vaccination programme with iwi health provider Ora Toa and as the Capital and Coast District Health Board’s Youth Lead on the COVID-19 response.

“I came to realise early on in the vaccination rollout that our people, particularly Māori living in Māori communities, had different ways of thinking towards vaccination,” she explains.

“When I was trying to get the kaumātua vaccinated for COVID-19, I often needed to sit down and understand their thoughts about the vaccine. That led me to think if we could study this in different age groups, we could learn more about Māori attitudes towards immunisation, and use that as a stepping stone to understand their needs for immunisation programmes in the future.”

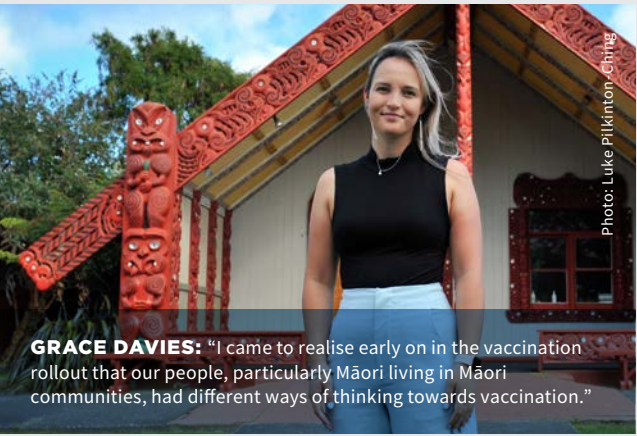
She says while many kaumātua had experienced epidemics before and knew that getting vaccinated was the right thing to do, some of the younger people had been influenced by social media and anti-vax activity and were mistrustful of the immunisation programme.

Davies will research the attitudes of Māori living in the Takapūwāhia

Pa community in Porirua, Wellington, where she grew up and now lives.

She says it’s a huge privilege to be able to do research in her own community.

“I see the research as a way of getting their views into the academic world, as well as helping with health outcomes.”



**GRACE DAVIES:** “I came to realise early on in the vaccination rollout that our people, particularly Māori living in Māori communities, had different ways of thinking towards vaccination.”

Photo: Luke Pilkinton-Ching



Funding success

Twenty-three University of Otago projects received a share of \$17.2 million in the most recent Marsden Funding round in November. The projects range from Zoology to Philosophy and comprise 17 main projects and six fast-start grants.

Otago researchers were awarded almost \$2.9 million in funding from the Health Research Council Career Development Awards in November, including two prestigious Sir Charles Hercus Fellowships. Dr **Matthew McNeil** (Microbiology and Immunology) and Dr **Nina Dickerhof** (Pathology and Biomedical Science, Christchurch) both received about \$600,000 for their projects. Dr McNeil is examining the global issue of drug-resistant Mycobacterium tuberculosis (TBM), while Dr Dickerhof's focus is on respiratory illness, both chronic and infections. Theirs were two of 22 successful Otago grants.

Twenty-two Otago researchers were awarded a share of almost \$1.9 million in NZ Lottery Health Grant funding in December. The funded research covers investigations from early Alzheimer's disease detection, bowel cancer risk reduction in New Zealand and better sexual health service access for Māori and Pacific youth.

Dunedin Study celebrates 50 years

The longitudinal Dunedin Study celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on with the cutting of a special birthday cake on 1 April (pictured right), marking the significant international contribution it has made to the field of human development.

1 April 1972 represents the first birth date of Dunedin-born babies enrolled in the University of Otago's Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health & Development Study, which over the course of the following year resulted in a total of 1,037 study members.

Since then, the cohort has been assessed regularly, with researchers having published more than 1,400 peer-reviewed journal articles, books and reports on many aspects of human health and development including, but not limited to, behavioural, oral health and respiratory domains.



Some of these significant contributions were recently recognised as among the most important for psychology and social science in the last 100 years, as acknowledged in the *Science News* 2021 'Century of Science'.

The *Otago Magazine* will take a closer look at this significant milestone in the November edition.

COVID-19: staff step up

Staff from across the University stepped up to help in March, when the Omicron wave of COVID-19 hit all campuses.

In Dunedin, thousands of students in flats and residential colleges became unwell and needed to isolate. Staff from across the University were re-deployed or volunteered to help staff in the colleges. The Otago



University Students' Association (OUSA), with financial and logistical support from the University, put together and delivered over 4,500 food and care packages to flats in isolation (pictured left).

Financial support for students was also provided from the University's Pūtea Tautoko initiative, which has now distributed close to \$6 million in financial aid to students since it was established in 2020.

University buildings win awards

University building developments and sustainability initiatives have won several national and international awards.



He Kāika Toitu, he Kāika ora: The Sustainability Neighbourhood won the Build Back Better category at Australasia's tertiary sector Green Gown sustainability awards late last year. This initiative is a group of University-owned flats where students are supported to live sustainably and agree to be the focus of sustainability research.

The Faculty of Dentistry redevelopment (pictured above) won the Greenstone Group Education Property 'Best in Category' Award in the 2021 Property Council of New Zealand Rider Levett Bucknall Property Industry Awards held in November, while the new research support Eccles Building won a 'Merit' Award.

New degree in Pharmaceutical Science

The University of Otago is now offering a Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Science degree - the only degree of its type in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Offered for the first time this year, Pharmaceutical Science encompasses a broad range of scientific disciplines critical to the discovery and development of new drugs and therapies, and can lead to a career at the forefront of science and technology.

Landmark consecutive Pacific student leaders

In a milestone moment for Pacific development at the University of Otago, the Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) has its second president of Pacific descent - directly after having its first.



In 2021 Michaela Waite-Harvey, who is of Fijian-Māori descent became the first OUSA president of Pacific decent. She has this year handed the reins to Melissa Lama (pictured above), who is of Tongan descent.

Waite-Harvey acknowledges the significance of this.

"People like to minimise firsts and say that it's tokenistic. I don't share this opinion. It's completely necessary to encourage our people to enter new spaces, especially colonial and Pākehā-dominated spaces. It's a journey towards decolonisation and sharing power."

Director of Pacific Development, Dr Tasileta Teevale says the legacy of being an OUSA student President at Otago is strong, with past OUSA Presidents going on to greater leadership roles. Lama says she was inspired by Ms Waite-Harvey's step up to leadership.

Nutrition's new food truck

The Department of Nutrition has launched its own food truck, to sell food on campus and in the community.

The brightly painted truck (pictured below) bridges the gap between theory and practice, providing students with a mobile venue to cook food and connect with the public.



A mix of undergraduates studying food service environments and postgraduates covering food service skills will be making use of the truck, which was sourced from Christchurch and painted by Lyttelton artist Jonny Waters.

Any leftover food will be donated to KiwiHarvest, which distributes excess food through the community.

Bishop's frog

A new species of endemic frog discovered from fossils in North Canterbury has been named in recognition of the late Otago Professor Phil Bishop (1957-2021) (pictured right) for his worldwide services to amphibian research and conservation.



The new species, Bishop's frog *Leiopelma bishopi*, is described in a paper published in the *New Zealand Journal of Zoology* by researchers from the University of Otago's Department of Zoology and the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Professorial appointments

The following University of Otago academics were promoted to the position of professor (effective 1 February 2022):

**Peter Adams** (Music); **Lynley Anderson** (Bioethics Centre); **Jesse Bering** (Centre for Science Communication); **Michael Black** (Biochemistry); **Jonathan Broadbent** (Oral Sciences); **Rebecca Campbell** (Physiology); **Timothy Eglinton** (Surgery, Christchurch); **Catherine Fowler** (Media, Film and Communication); **Anita Gibbs** (Sociology, Gender Studies and Criminology); **Clinton Golding** (Higher Education Development Centre); **Rebecca Grainger** (Medicine, Wellington); **Alex Gunn** (College of Education); **Siân Halcrow** (Anatomy); **Chris Hepburn** (Marine Science); **Christopher Holmes** (Theology); **Zhiyi Huang** (Computer Science); **Michael Keall** (Public Health, Wellington); **Ali Knott** (Computer Science); **Simone Marshall** (English and Linguistics); **Natalie Medlicott** (School of Pharmacy); **Karen Nairn** (College of Education); **Philippa Seaton** (Centre for Postgraduate



Nursing, Christchurch); **Simon Stebbings** (Medicine); **Michael Tatley** (New Zealand Pharmacovigilance Centre); **Gareth Treharne** (Psychology); **Robin Turner** (Biostatistics Centre); **Angela Wanhalla** (History); **Gerry Wilkins** (Medicine).

New Year Honours

The following Otago alumni and staff received 2022 New Year Honours.

KNZM: Professor **Jim Mann**, CNZM, for services to health.

CNZM: **Rāwiri Paratene**, ONZM, for services to Māori, film and theatre; Professor **Harlene Hayne**, ONZM, for services to health and wellbeing; Dr **Geoff Lorigan**, for services to business and leadership development; Faumuina Professor **Fa’afetai Sopoaga**, for services to Pacific health and tertiary education.

ONZM: Dr Linda Bryant, for services to pharmacy and health; Ms **Gaye Bryham**, for services to sport and recreation; Professor **John Hutton**, for services to women’s health education; Dr **Lindsay Mildenhall**, for services to neonatal intensive care and resuscitation training; Mr **Malcolm Wong**, for services to the community and New Zealand-China relations.

MNZM: Dr **Graeme Fenton**, for services to Māori and rural health; Ms **Shannon Pakura**, for services to social work; Dr **Ken Romeril**, for services to haemotology; Professor **Jacinta Ruru**, for services to Māori and the law; Mrs **Beryl Wilcox**, for services to the community; Dr **Doug Wilson**, for services to health and seniors.

QSM: Mrs **Jenny Agnew**, for services to historical research and the Chinese community; Mr **Trevor Agnew**, for services to children’s literacy and historical research; Mr **Aart Brusse**, for services to music; Mrs **Lynley Bunton**, for services to education and the community. Mrs **Ailsa McGilvary-Howard**, for services

to conservation, particularly wildlife conservation; Mrs **Irene Mosley**, for services to the community; Mrs **Noeline Watson**, for services to the community.

Emeritus professors

The University Council has awarded Emeritus Professor status to: Professor **Ewan Fordyce** (Geology); Professor **Vicky Cameron** (Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch); Professor **Sue Pullon** (Primary Healthcare and General Practice, University of Otago, Wellington); Professor **Pat Cragg** (Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)).

Awards and achievements

Distinguished Professor **Philippa Howden-Chapman** and researchers at the He Kāinga Oranga – Housing and Health Research Programme at the University of Otago, Wellington, have been awarded the 2021 Rutherford Medal, New Zealand’s top research honour, by the Royal Society Te Apārangi for their groundbreaking research into the impact of housing interventions on residents’ health and wellbeing. The medal was awarded to Professor Howden-Chapman and her colleagues, Professor **Julian Crane**, Associate Professor **Michael Keall** and Associate Professor **Nevil Pierse**, as well as the wider research team. The He Kāinga Oranga team has been researching a wide range of housing and health issues for more than 20 years.

Three Otago early-mid career researchers have been awarded Rutherford Discovery Fellowships from the Royal Society Te Apārangi that will support them to accelerate their research careers in Aotearoa: Dr **Alana Alexander** (Anatomy), Dr **Htin Aung** (Microbiology and Immunology) and Dr **Khoon Lim**

(Orthopaedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Medicine, Christchurch). Dr **Khoon Lim** has also been awarded the European Society for Biomaterials’ coveted Jean Leray Award for 2022 – rarely granted to researchers outside Europe – for his work in the area of bio fabrication and 3D bioprinting.

Dr **Neil Vallelly** (Division of Humanities) has been awarded a prestigious Rutherford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Royal Society Te Apārangi. Dr Vallelly will use the Fellowship to examine the relationship between contemporary capitalism - often referred to as neoliberalism - and the rise of migrant detention, especially of asylum seekers, during the past four decades.

Seven University of Otago staff have been elected as Fellows of the Academy of the Royal Society Te Apārangi. They are: Professor Emerita **Barbara Brookes** (History), Professor **Peter Fineran** (Microbiology and Immunology), Professor **Debbie Hay** (Pharmacology and Toxicology), Professor **Philip Hill** (Preventive and Social Medicine), Professor **Nigel Perry** (Plant and Food Research and Department of Chemistry), Professor **Murray Thomson** (Dentistry) and Professor **Angela Wanhalla** (History).

Associate Professor **Aniruddha Chatterjee** (Pathology) and Dr **Rajiv Kumar** (a medical oncologist in Christchurch and honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Pathology) have won the 2021 Roche Translational Cancer Research Fellowship Award, worth \$30,000, for their project on lung cancer.

Dr **Olivia Harrison** (Psychology) has received the 2021 L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Fellowship (see page 45-47).

Associate Professor **Sarah Wakes** (Mathematics and Statistics), has been made a Fellow of Engineering New Zealand. Associate Professor Wakes expertise is in computational fluid dynamics with a

particular research focus on applications to engineering design and wind flow over complex coastal geomorphology.

Dr **Anna Pilbrow** (Medicine, Christchurch) has been awarded the Heart Foundation’s inaugural Foundation100 Research Fellowship to investigate new genetic markers to identify people at imminent risk of a heart attack.

Professor **Michael Baker** (Public Health, Wellington) has been awarded the 2021 Cranwell Medal from the New Zealand Association of Scientists. The Cranwell Medal is awarded to a practising scientist for excellence in communicating science to the general public in any area of science or technology.

Emeritus Professor **Brett Delahunt** (Pathology and Molecular Medicine, Wellington) has been awarded a unique Gold Medal from the New Zealand Society of Pathologists in recognition of his 41 years of service, including his 10 years as President.

Dr **Dominic Agyei** (Food Science) won the 2021 Young Researcher of the Year award from the International Union of Food Science and Technology and the International Academy of Food Science and Technology.

Dr **Susan Wardell** (Social Anthropology) was the inaugural recipient of literary journal *Headland*’s Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne short form nonfiction essay prize for her essay “Red Zone Pie”.

Professor **Richie Poulton** (Psychology) was named in the Clarivate PLC list of Highly Cited Researchers, indicating the significant and broad ongoing influence of the “Dunedin Study” and Professor Poulton’s research into human development, and the Study’s continuing influence on policy makers in New Zealand and overseas.

Dr **Dana Ott** (Management) and Dr **Nicola Beatson** (Accountancy and Finance) both won “Outstanding Paper”

at the Emerald Literati 2021 awards. This provides their articles global recognition.

Professor **Phil Bishop** posthumously received the Dean’s Medal for Contribution to Supervision at the 2021 OUSA Supervisor of the Year Awards. Dr **Charlotte King** (Anatomy) won the Overall Supervisor of the Year award, while Dr **Fairleigh Gilmour** (Sociology, Gender Studies and Criminology) won the New Supervisor of the Year award. Bishop’s award recognised his outstanding efforts in supporting Zoology and Ecology postgraduate students.

Trade Services Operations Manager **Russ Linwood** received the Vice-Chancellor’s Award at the University's 2021 Professional Staff awards in recognition of his long and dedicated service and adaptability to the challenges caused by COVID-19. Other awards went to **Dave Hood** (IT Training and Development Adviser); **Chris Smith** (Curator of the WD Trotter Anatomy Museum); and **Carol Dunstone** (Anatomy Technical Manager). The **Procurement Office** won the 2021 Sustainable Practice Award.

The **Otago Business School** (OBS) has received reaccreditation from EQUIS for an extended five-year period. EQUIS accreditation is the most comprehensive institutional accreditation system for business and management schools and is acknowledged worldwide. The OBS is one of fewer than 100 business schools worldwide to hold dual EQUIS and AACSB accreditation.

Appointments

**Stephen Higgs** has become University of Otago Chancellor (see pages 18-20) and **Trish Oakley** has become Pro-Chancellor. Education Minister Hon. Chris Hipkins has appointed former Cabinet Minister Hon. **Clare Curran** to the University

of Otago Council. The Minister also reappointed current Council member **Malcolm Wong** to a second four-year term through to 31 December 2025.

Professor **Suzanne Pitama** is the new Dean and Head of Campus at the University of Otago, Christchurch (see pages 6-9).

Professor **Joanne Baxter** has been appointed as the new Dean of the Dunedin School of Medicine. She will take up the role on 1 July 2022 (see pages 6-9).

Associate Professor **Vivienne Anderson** is the new Dean of the University of Otago College of Education.

Professor **David Baxter** is the new Dean of the Graduate Research School.

Obituaries

Emeritus Professor **Peter Innes** (Faculty of Dentistry). Joined the University in 1965 as Research Officer, Basic Services, in the Dental School, becoming Lecturer in 1967. He left for 25 years, returning in 1992 to the position of Dean, a role he held until his retirement in 2005.

**Erina Hunt** (Pathways and English Language Centre). From 2003, she was a committed and excellent teacher whose enthusiasm inspired both students and colleagues.

Dr **Moana Jackson**, who had strong links with the Faculty of Law and the wider University. Dr Jackson was a world-renowned Māori leader who made an enormous contribution to social justice, decolonisation and uplifting and raising awareness of Māori issues. He was a regular visitor to Te Kaupeka Tātai Ture (The Otago Faculty of Law), and was also a mentor to those in Te Roopū Whai Pūtake, the Māori Law Students Association at Otago. May the legacy of his work continue on, and may the spirit in which he carried himself be an inspiration to us all.



# Glitter, glider and gelatin

The works of three significant contemporary Māori artists have been added to the University of Otago's Hocken Collections.

**THERE WAS A TIME** when Māori art in public art galleries and collections was more likely to involve Māori as subjects than as makers.

Hocken Head Curator, Pictorial Collections, Robyn Notman, cites as one example the Hocken's oil painting, *The New Zealand Chiefs in Wesley's House*, featuring a Europeanised portrayal by an English artist, James Smetham, of 13 Māori on a visit to England in 1863.

Notman says that, for the Hocken, things began to change from the 1960s, with notable acquisitions by Māori practitioners since then including works by the acclaimed Port Chalmers-based artist and former Frances Hodgkins Fellow, Ralph Hotere (Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa).

That ongoing interest in collecting art by contemporary Māori artists is reflected in the Hocken Collection's three latest acquisitions.

They include a glittering work by Auckland-based artist, Reuben Paterson (Ngāti Rangitihi, Ngāi Tūhoe, Tūhourangi). In *To Sea You*, Paterson used glitter to create an ocean-blue canvas painting, and blue pins and sequins to cover a complementary dried gourd.

Paterson says that this and similar

works have been heavily influenced by traditional Māori koru and kowhaiwhai patterns, and by the works of the Dutch-Kiwi artist, Theo Schoon, whose interest in Māori design embraced kowhaiwhai patterns and carved gourds.

Notman says that the Hocken was especially interested in Paterson's work because he is one of this country's foremost contemporary Māori artists and not previously represented in the Hocken's collections.

The other two works feature photographs, although these are an artistic world away from your average instant selfies and holiday snaps.

Auckland-based artist and art curator, Nathan Pōhio (Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāti Tahu, Kāti Tūāhuriri), used what are called "lenticular lenses" to produce printed images of musician Marlon Williams (Kāti Tahu) in 2010. Williams is depicted as a lookalike of the silent movie star, Buster Keaton (one of Pōhio's heroes), whose expression changes between three classic Keaton poses as the image is viewed from different angles. Titled *Homemade Glider Kitset*, the Hocken has purchased one of five of these prints.

Notman says that the Hocken is

Nathan Pōhio (Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāti Tahu, Kāti Tūāhuriri) b.1970, *Homemade Glider Kitset*, 2011, lenticular photograph on paper, 1290mm x 940mm, purchased (via Webb's) from the fundraising exhibition, "When the Dust Settles" at Artspace Aotearoa, Auckland, 18 August – 19 October 2021. Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, V2021.17.2.



Photo: Dave Bull



Reuben Paterson (Ngāti Rangitihi, Ngāi Tūhoe, Tūhourangi) b.1973, *To Sea You*, 2021, glitter on canvas, sequins on gourd, 1015 x 1015 x 35mm (canvas), 550 x 300 x 120 mm (gourd), purchased (via Webb's) from the fundraising exhibition, "When the Dust Settles" at Artspace Aotearoa, Auckland, 18 August – 19 October 2021. Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, V2021.17.1.



Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi), b.1985, 4954 *Guardian of the Lake*, 2021, whenua coloured gelatin silver photograph, Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago.

"I just think that it is a very prestigious collection, and it is very special to feel like your work can be accessed by so many people."

especially interested in Pōhio's work because of his (and Marlon Williams') links to the southern iwi, Kāti Tahu, and because neither the artist's work nor the photographic technique are otherwise represented in the Hocken's collections.

The Hocken purchased the Paterson and Pōhio works at an art auction fundraiser last year in support of the Auckland trust-run contemporary art gallery, Artspace Aotearoa. Paterson created *To Sea You* expressly to donate to the auction, and Pōhio donated one of his existing Williams prints.

The third artist, Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi), was the Frances Hodgkins Fellow at Otago in 2020/2021. During her tenure, the Dunedin-based artist created a series of gelatin silver photographs, titled *Summering on Lakes*

*Te Anau and Manapouri*, that re-captured, from a Māori perspective, scenes the famed Dunedin photographer, Alfred Burton, had photographed in 1889.

Reweti explains that the project came about through her researching the Hocken's collections, which include some of Burton's historic black and white images. Reweti hand-coloured her photographs using earth pigments from the areas depicted in the images, a technique also not otherwise represented in the Hocken's collections.

The Hocken has purchased from Reweti a suite of 16 of her photographs that focus on Lake Manapouri, as a part of its policy of acquiring work from each Frances Hodgkins fellow.

Notman says that all three artists' works support the Hocken's key priorities of filling gaps in and improving the depth of the collections; and ensuring that they represent a broad spectrum of New Zealand artists and resonate with the research and cultural interests of the country's changing demographic: especially by adding works that strengthen the representation of Māori artists and resonate with Māori and Pasifika students and researchers.

She says the Hocken will this year advertise for an art curator with expertise in toi Māori and proficiency in te reo and tikanga Māori, to encourage engagement with Māori and to enable a Māori perspective on the art collections and the way they are used.

"I'd love for the University to consider developing a course in Māori visual arts," Notman adds, "and have the wealth of important art we care for included in the course as work to be encountered, discussed, thought and written about."

Paterson encapsulates the response of the artists to the acquisition of their works. "I just think that it is a very prestigious collection, and it is very special to feel like your work can be accessed by so many people."

The Paterson and Pōhio works, along with a selection of Reweti's photographs, are currently on display in the Hocken foyer.

IAN DOUGHERTY



Books by  
**Otago  
alumni**

**A History of Queen’s Redoubt and the Invasion of the Waikato**, by Dr Neville Ritchie and Ian Barton, Atuanui Press, December 2021.

**A Maze of Grace**, by Natalie Yule Yeoman, Wayfarer Books/Cuba Press, Wellington, 2019.

**Is Anyone in Charge here? A Christological Evaluation of the Idea of Human Dominion over Creation**, by Selwyn Yeoman, Pickwick/Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, 2020.

**The Twelve**, by Alexander Blok, a new translation by Natasha Templeton and Alan Roddick, Cold Hub Press, August 2021.

**Upriver from the Sea to the Southern Alps**, by Colin Heinz, Quentin Wilson Publishing, August 2020.

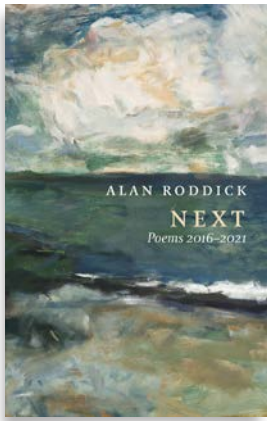
**Buy Me Love**, by Greg Brook, Tolcarne Press 2021.

**The Unluckiest All Black?**, by Robert Greig Pringle, Troubador, April 2022.

**Progressing the Journey: Lyrics and liturgy for a conscious church**, by Susan Jones, Philip Garside Publishing Ltd, February 2022.

**Our Canada. A Year with Canuck Kids**, by Alister Mathieson, Kelly Jackson & Diane Simpson, Blossom Books, 2021.

**Alumni:** if you have recently published a book please email [mag.editor@otago.ac.nz](mailto:mag.editor@otago.ac.nz)



**Next: Poems  
2016-2021**

Alan Roddick  
*Otago University Press, February 2022*

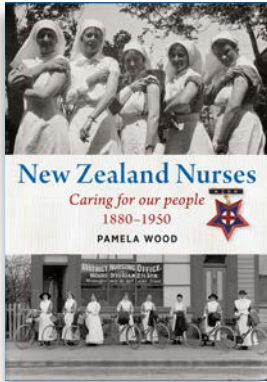
Written in the eighth and ninth decades of his life, Alan Roddick’s third collection of poetry, *Next*, examines the past, observes the present and speculates on the future.

Anchored in the action of daily life – whether it be a ride in a mirrored elevator or a roadside conversation with a friend – his poems speak of migration, family, friendship, ageing and mortality.

*Next* is marked by a rare blend of uncompromising vision and deep compassion.

Here is poetry that delights in warmth, humour, wit and grace, that revels in the beauty of the world, that insists on “anticrepuscular rays” at twilight even as it’s asking the niggling question: “Tomorrow, though?”

[www.otago.ac.nz/press/books/otago834552](http://www.otago.ac.nz/press/books/otago834552)



**New Zealand  
Nurses: Caring  
for our people  
1880–1950**

Pamela Wood  
*Otago University Press, April 2022*

Author Pamela Wood’s *New Zealand Nurses* draws on a wealth of nurses’ personal stories to identify the values, traditions, community and folklore of the nursing culture from 1880 – when hospital reforms began to formally introduce “modern nursing” into New Zealand – to 1950, three years after New Zealand severed its final tie as part of the British Empire.

It explores the growth of a distinctly Kiwi nursing style and how nurses in this part of the globe responded to, and ultimately came to challenge, imperial influences.

*New Zealand Nurses* is rich in detail and understated humour as it examines the nursing cultures that emerged in a range of different settings and circumstances: from hospitals to homes, rural backblocks to Māori settlements, and from war and disaster zones to nursing through a pandemic.

[www.otago.ac.nz/press/books/otago836897](http://www.otago.ac.nz/press/books/otago836897)

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# Easing Anxiety



As rates of anxiety increase worldwide, a new study from University of Otago neuroscientist Dr Olivia Harrison may hold the key to understanding anxiety better – from the inside out. With the backing of both a five-year Rutherford Discovery Fellowship and the 2021 L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Fellowship, she hopes to make a difference.

**DR OLIVIA HARRISON:**  
“Anxiety is unique to every individual and needs to be treated as such.”



**ANXIETY – IT’S AN** all-too familiar feeling for many of us. Your heart starts to race, your palms go clammy, you suddenly feel like you can’t breathe. And as the panic sets in, it all gets horribly worse.

It’s a feeling Otago neuroscientist Dr Olivia Harrison knows intimately. As a member of the group she describes as the “worried well” – fully functioning, healthy A-type personalities with above-average levels of anxiety – she is susceptible to feeling highly anxious when things go wrong.

But understanding the way the brain perceives those physical responses to anxiety, and how this communication between the brain and body can go awry to perpetuate a vicious loop of anxiety (anxiety-symptoms-more anxiety), may help develop treatments and techniques to help manage those symptoms better.

“It’s about how we can treat those who are experiencing debilitating levels of anxiety, but also how we can protect these ‘worried well’ and keep us from tipping over, especially with all the chaos that’s happening in the world,” says Harrison.

“We know certain levels of anxiety can be healthy for things such as self-awareness and self-protection, but as society continues to evolve, we are seeing anxiety occur at more disabling levels, and our coping strategies and treatments are lagging behind.

“Anxiety is unique to every individual and needs to be treated as such. The treatments that work well for some people do not work for everyone. We also know that many common treatments don’t always last forever, and it may be because we are not giving people the necessary tools for their specific anxiety profile.”

Awarded a prestigious Rutherford Discovery Fellowship, along with the 2021 L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Fellowship, the study will look at how treatments such as exercise and anti-anxiety medication may help improve the brain’s perception of anxiety symptoms. The five-year project builds on Harrison’s earlier research, conducted while living in Switzerland, where she explored the way

the brain processes breathing perceptions, and how this might be altered with greater levels of anxiety.

And with one in four New Zealanders at risk of developing mental health struggles, particularly women and younger people, understanding why certain strategies work with some people and not with others could help provide valuable insights into the treatment and management of anxiety.

“We know exercise can help for most people. But we don’t know exactly how it’s working. What happens to the brain? What happens to the way people perceive their body, and how might this help in the way they manage anxiety symptoms? And how can we break this down to help people a bit more – because someone who is in the middle of an anxiety crisis is not going to go out and join a gym class. What can we pull out of the effect of that intervention to create a first step, a mechanism that could help break the cycle of anxiety?”

Alongside the exercise study, Harrison and her team are also conducting a clinical study exploring the effect of the most commonly prescribed anti-anxiety medication (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, or SSRIs) on people diagnosed with anxiety.

“We look at them before and after six weeks of anti-anxiety medication. That’s

really important to know because, at the moment in New Zealand, the first port of call is often anti-anxiety medication. We know that SSRIs only work for some people and you have to wait a long time, usually at least six weeks to know if it’s worked.

“That’s a really long process for someone in crisis. By understanding the types of people or symptoms that SSRIs work for best, we hope to build up a better picture or profile of where SSRIs will make an impact.”

Harrison’s journey back to Otago and her latest research has been a “wiggly road”, but she has always been interested in the connection between the brain and body. After graduating from the University of Otago in 2011 with a double degree in neuroscience and exercise science, she went to Oxford University to complete a doctorate in clinical neurosciences where she explored the brain’s perception of breathlessness using brain imaging. Alongside this, Harrison has always been involved in the realm of high performance sport, working for a time with High Performance Sport New Zealand, and in Oxford researching both how we perceive our body while exercising, and how this information could be used to make us go faster, be stronger.

But she was sure the outcomes of her work could apply to more than just making an elite athlete go two per cent faster.

“And if we better understand how exercise and medication really affects those anxiety symptoms, we may be able to provide some of those crucial ‘baby steps’ an individual in a crisis could take to help them feel better. And that will help all of us.”



**OTAGO NEUROSCIENTIST DR OLIVIA HARRISON** received both a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship and the 2021 L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Fellowship last year.

“I kept thinking, what if they’re having a bad day? I needed to take a more holistic view.”

This change in focus led Harrison to Zurich, Switzerland in 2018, where she was awarded a European Union Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship (\$NZ300,000) to study “the interoceptive link between anxiety and breathing perception” – or how anxiety may be related to the way we perceive our body signals.

“The field of interoception – the way we perceive signals from inside our body – has been a lesser-understood sense [compared to the exteroceptive or external senses, including the traditional five such as sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste] until more recently.

“But in the last 10 years, there’s been a boom within psychiatry with a lot of studies exploring the relationship between mental health issues and disturbances in our body, and how we perceive these.

“It makes a lot of sense. If you think about the last time you were really worried about something, you probably had all these thoughts rushing around in your head. But if you think about how you felt physically – you probably felt like your heart was racing, you might have been holding your breath, or breathing a bit faster. These repercussions of our thoughts happen inside our body.

“And what happens is that if we don’t read those reactions properly, it perpetuates a cycle. We feel like we can’t breathe, so we breathe faster, then we feel light-headed and worse. That inability to monitor what’s actually going on and to use that information and interpret it, means that it

can make the symptoms much worse.”

The Zurich study looked at two groups – the “worried well” (that term used for the group of fully-functioning and healthy individuals with higher-than-average levels of anxiety) and a low anxiety group.

“We saw whopping differences between the groups,” says Harrison.

“People with higher levels of anxiety were less sensitive to changes in their bodies, they were less able to detect resistance in their breathing and had lower levels of insight into their performance, and also differences in their brain activity related to making predictions about breathing symptoms in the future.

“So now we want to explore what happens when you add an intervention – like exercise or medication – and how those perceptions change.”

Now back at Otago, Harrison is part of the IMAGE Otago Research Group (co-led with the School of Pharmacy’s Associate Professor Bruce Russell) which uses behavioural and neuroimaging to investigate underlying mechanisms and treatment responses in mental health disorders. While Harrison’s work is focused on anxiety and depression, Bruce looks at more severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, addiction and depression with an emphasis on treatment-resistance.

Harrison says the five-year Rutherford Fellowship allows the “gift of time” to her research – a rare gift in today’s academic environment, or indeed, modern society.

“It means we can run longitudinal studies. I can run the study, do an

intervention and then follow up on it.”

Harrison says they will have around 70 participants in each study. Working alongside primary carers and GPs, the clinical study has begun, with around five people through so far, while preparation for the exercise study is underway following a 20-person pilot study. This includes building on and perfecting the tests used from the Zurich study, exploring the latest MRI imaging techniques and deciding on what form the exercise intervention will take.

“It won’t be some awful boot camp with a sergeant-major type shouting at you to do another burpee,” she laughs. “We need people to enjoy it as much as possible and to feel in control of their exercise. I am really lucky to be working with both Associate Professor Elaine Hargreaves and Professor Jim Cotter from the School of Physical Education, Sport and Exercise Sciences on the exercise side of things. Jim was my Honours supervisor back in the day, and Elaine has a wealth of knowledge in how to exercise to really make you feel good.”

Harrison hopes the study will provide valuable knowledge that will be useful both from an individual’s perspective (knowledge is power, the more you understand what’s going on inside you, the less scary it feels) and in treating the condition.

“I’m not a clinician, I’m a neuroscientist. This is an important adjunct to what is happening in that clinical environment.

“People want to know why a treatment they’re prescribed works – ‘it’s going to help your anxiety’ is not really enough. Knowing how something will help, the effect it has on your symptoms and brain’s perception of what’s happening inside you may motivate more people to try it.

“And if we better understand how exercise and medication really affects those anxiety symptoms, we may be able to provide some of those crucial ‘baby steps’ an individual in a crisis could take to help them feel better. And that will help all of us.”

**AMIE RICHARDSON**



# New trading lab builds on enduring heritage

**ALUMNI CONNECTIONS** are literally in the foundations of the newly-built BNZ Bloomberg Markets Lab Te Taura Takata. Situated on the ground floor of the Otago Business School (OBS), the state-of-the-art trading lab will provide students and faculty with access to real-time and historical financial data, news and analysis. With 12 Bloomberg Professional terminals, it is one of the largest academic trading labs in New Zealand and will be used extensively in Investment, Behavioural Finance, Corporate Finance and Banking courses.

The Lab is the first trading room in the country to include a cultural narrative in its design which reflects the historical importance of the site to both Māori and settlers. Before the extensive land reclamation around Otago Harbour Te Awa Moana Ōtākou, the setting of the OBS would have overlooked the water.

“The harbour has always been rich in resources and underpinned significant economic activity. It is where, in the early 1800s, local Kāi Tahu traded pigs, flax, potatoes and other resources with European sealers and whalers,” says Jennie Henderson, Prospect Researcher in the Development and Alumni Relations Office. The 1848 Scottish Free Church settlers also traded with Kāi Tahu nearby, in the present-day Exchange area. Later, as the location of the Bank of New Zealand (BNZ) and the Stock Exchange, along with other banks and businesses, this area was the economic centre of early Dunedin.

Gifted the name Te Taura Takata (The Ties That Bind) by the University’s Office of Māori Development, the design elements of the Lab illustrate the past, present and future significance of the room.

Artist Madison Kelly (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe) says “the design for this trading space speaks to a meeting of two fishing lines – one of iron and one of bone – across a dynamic whakapapa of moana, whenua, kaimoana and people”.

The Lab also continues historical connections between the University and BNZ and New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX).

Originally intended as Dunedin’s post office, the Stock Exchange building in Princes Street became the first home of the University in 1871. When the University outgrew the premises in 1877, it was taken

over by the Colonial Bank, which was subsequently taken over by BNZ in 1895. The building was then sold to a syndicate

“The design for this trading space speaks to a meeting of two fishing lines – one of iron and one of bone – across a dynamic whakapapa of moana, whenua, kaimoana and people.”

## Time capsule lives on

**A donation by BNZ in 1974** led to the redevelopment of the University’s Union St Bridge into a piazza. A plaque was put in place by the bridge and a time capsule was buried nearby.

In 2016, contractors working on the University landscaping project unearthed the capsule. A glimpse inside revealed:

- Dunedin North Branch’s Centennial Booklet
- University of Otago’s Medical School’s centenary history
- A copy of the University’s 1974 Calendar
- A copy of the student roll
- A copy of the bank’s latest (1974) Annual Report
- Newspaper clippings relative to the gift to the University

The capsule now lives in a display case outside the Bloomberg Lab.



Photo: Dave Bull

The newly built BNZ Bloomberg Markets Lab Te Taura Takata in the Otago Business School.



Students work in the new BNZ Bloomberg Markets Lab Te Taura Takata.

Photo: Dave Bull



# Supporting Freshwater Sciences

## A new Professorial Chair in Freshwater Sciences, initiated and supported by a substantial gift from Emerita Professor Dame Carolyn Burns DNZM CBE, is being established at the University of Otago.

Dame Carolyn has made an initial gift of \$1 million to the Otago Foundation Trust and will make further annual gifts over the coming years to support the endowment for the Chair, which has been established in her name. At the same time, the University will actively begin fundraising to match Dame Carolyn's gift, creating an endowment fund of approximately \$5 million which will ensure the Chair can be funded in perpetuity.

Dame Carolyn is a leading international authority on the ecology of lakes and was made a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to ecological research.

She has a long association with the University of Otago, beginning in 1969 when she started work as a Lecturer in the Department of Zoology. She was Head of Department from 1998 to 2005, and continues to tutor fourth-year students, supervise PhD students and undertake research.

Dame Carolyn says the need to protect and manage our abundant freshwater ecosystems has never been more

urgent, and this is behind her decision to support the establishment of the Chair in Freshwater Sciences.

"We have taken our freshwater systems for granted for too long. Now, with increasing population size, increasing land development and climate change, it is critical we acknowledge the value of our freshwater ecosystems with research-informed conservation and management strategies. We have to do that now; we can't wait any longer."

The Head of the Department of Zoology, Professor Gerry Closs, says Dame Carolyn's gift comes at a key moment for the management of freshwaters in New Zealand and will ensure Otago remains at the forefront of teaching and research in this area.

"Dame Carolyn's legacy of scholarship and leadership at Otago is immense and has been of tremendous benefit to New Zealand and globally," says Closs. "Her wonderfully generous gift will create new and exciting opportunities to continue and extend that legacy into the future, addressing the many challenges that we face with respect to sustainable management of our freshwater ecosystems."

Dame Carolyn's pioneering research on the ecology of zooplankton has underpinned much of the modern theory of lake biomanipulation, whereby lake food webs are managed to maintain water quality and lake health.

**EMERITA PROFESSOR DAME CAROLYN BURNS:** "... it is critical we acknowledge the value of our freshwater ecosystems with research-informed conservation and management strategies. We have to do that now; we can't wait any longer."

She was awarded the International Limnological Society's Naumann-Thienemann Medal in 2007; the New Zealand Freshwater Sciences Medal in 2013; the Marsden Medal, awarded by the NZ Association of Scientists in 2017; and the Thomson Medal, awarded by the Royal Society Te Apārangi in 2018.

She has also served on many New Zealand and international conservation organisations, including the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and she was the first female President of the International Limnological Society.

In 1984 she was awarded a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) for services to conservation and in 1993 was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. In 2020, Dame Carolyn made a gift to the Otago Foundation Trust to endow the Carolyn Burns 50th Anniversary Visiting Fellowship in Freshwater Sciences.

## Pūtea Tautoko recognised at fundraising awards

Pūtea Tautoko, the University's student hardship fund, was "Highly Commended" in the Best Individual Giving category at the virtual Fundraising Institute of New Zealand (FINZ) 2021 Awards. The awards, for achievements in 2020, were presented online in late March, after several delays due to COVID-19.

Pūtea Tautoko has become the largest student financial support initiative in Otago's history. Including donations, University budget allocations, and emergency Government funding, it grew to \$4.1 million in 2020 and was fully used to support nearly 2,600 students.

Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) Director Shelagh Murray says Pūtea Tautoko aimed to keep students studying and able to pay their bills through easy and quick access to emergency funding.

"Pūtea Tautoko is the largest fund of its type ever launched by Otago and moved quickly from the drawing board to an active fund, disbursing support to students in need. It greatly raised the profile of philanthropy to staff and students, and our global community of alumni and friends. As such, it both typified and exemplified the University's wider student-focused response to the COVID-19 pandemic."

**ONE OF OTAGO'S 2021 20TWENTIES AWARD RECIPIENTS NAMRATA CHAND:** "It ... means being part of the community of alumni who are using their education to make a difference to their communities."

## Trailblazers celebrated in 20Twenties Young Alumni Awards

**20**  
twenties

An inspirational group of 20 young Otago alumni have been recognised in this year's 20Twenties Young Alumni Awards.

From around New Zealand and as far afield as Sydney and California, these young graduates are making their mark in their diverse communities and workplaces, in professional, volunteer and leadership roles.

The award recipients are drawn from all Divisions of the University and are recognised for their contribution to a wide range of areas, including: giving marginalised groups and minorities a voice; providing key advice on climate change policy; stepping into rural leadership roles; working to improve Māori and Moana Pacific peoples' health outcomes and forging a career in high performance sport.

Receiving a 20Twenties award for her leadership in improving climate resilience in communities, BAppSc graduate Namrata Chand says she was overjoyed to hear she had been named a 20Twenties recipient.

"The award means a lot to me," says Chand. "It means being recognised for the roles, organisations and communities I was able to serve due to my education pathway at the University of Otago. It also means being part of a community of alumni who are using their education to make a difference to their communities."

After graduation, Chand returned to Fiji, where she worked in a variety of marine science and climate change roles. At the same time, she pursued a master's degree in Environmental Science from the University of the South Pacific and is now back at Otago undertaking a PhD in the field of marine science, focusing on seaweeds.

### Recipients of the 20Twenties Young Alumni Awards for 2021:

**Benjamin Abraham**, BA(Hons)  
**Arina Aizal**, BA  
**Joshua Alefosio-Pei**, BSc  
**Umi Asaka**, BSW  
**Jay Barrett**, BSc  
**Katie Batterton**, BSc  
**Cameron Burrow**, BCom  
**Namrata Chand**, BAppSc  
**Breen Cowie**, BCom  
**Caitlin Helme**, BA(Hons)  
**Maddi Ingham**, BCom LLB  
**Emma Jefferies**, BDS  
**Thomas Kindley**, BPhEd  
**Mary Jane Kivalu**, BCom, MBA  
**Calum Rickard**, BSc (Hons)  
**Diana Shaul**, BPharm  
**Tisiola Talalima**, BBiomedSc  
**Rachel Tombs**, BA(Hons)  
**Hanna Van der Giessen**, BSc(Hons), MHealSc  
**Hamid Zawari**, BSc





Mrs Ngaere Geddes and Professor Bill Geddes (mid-1970s).



Bill Geddes behind the camera in Fiji in 1973. Photo taken by Lew Parlette, who was mentored by and served as field assistant to Professor Geddes on the film *Island of the Red Prawns*, filmed in Vatulele Island, Fiji 1973.

## Understanding, tolerance and generosity at heart of gift

**A GENEROUS GIFT** from the late Mrs Ngaere Geddes and her husband, renowned anthropologist and Otago alumnus Professor Bill Geddes, will provide invaluable support for students of Social Anthropology at Otago.

Mrs Geddes, who died in February 2020, left \$1.3 million in her estate to establish an endowment, The Professor W. R. Geddes Bequest, to provide funding in perpetuity for scholarships for postgraduate Social Anthropology students. Professor Geddes died in 1989. The funds will be administered by the Otago Foundation Trust, with the first scholarships to be awarded in 2023.

Dr Greg Rawlings, Social Anthropology's Head of Programme, says the Programme is honoured to have received this incredibly generous endowment. The bequest will support students with fieldwork, research and writing on projects that resonate with Professor Geddes' vision of the discipline around the world.

"This transformative bequest will allow our postgraduate scholars and students to continue to advance anthropological knowledge with the rigour, commitment

and enthusiasm that the Geddes' embraced over many decades of research and service."

Professor Geddes was born in New Plymouth in 1916 and graduated from Otago with a BA in 1938 and an MA in 1939, majoring in Philosophy and Psychology.

After serving in WWII in the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, he completed a PhD at the University of London. He lectured at Birkbeck College and then took up a lectureship at Auckland University College, before being appointed Professor and Chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Sydney in 1959.

He was a foundation councillor of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and played a significant role in the development of ethnographic filmmaking.

Ngaere Geddes (née Te Punga) was born in Halcombe, New Zealand in 1928. She graduated from Teachers' Training College in Wellington and held primary school teaching posts in New Zealand and Australia.

The couple's paths first crossed in 1956, when the President of the Chinese Cultural Association invited a group of

New Zealanders on a one-month tour of China. The delegation included an anthropologist (Bill) and a primary school teacher (Ngaere).

From the late 1950s to the mid-1980s, the couple undertook extensive field work throughout the Pacific and Southeast Asia, living and working in Thailand, Fiji, Borneo, Bali and India.

Otago's Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Shelagh Murray, says the University is deeply grateful for this very generous gift.

"This transformative bequest will allow our postgraduate scholars and students to continue to advance anthropological knowledge with the rigour, commitment and enthusiasm that the Geddes' embraced over many decades of research and service."



1873-2023  
LAW AT OTAGO  
Te Ture ki Ōtākou  
**150**  
YEARS

## Conference and reunion to celebrate 150 years of Law at Otago

Save the date:  
Thu 13 – Sat 15 April 2023

**In 2023 the Otago Faculty of Law will celebrate 150 years of law teaching and study at Otago.**

The University's first law lecturer was Sir Robert Stout, who started teaching in 1873, just two years after the University opened. Sir Robert went on to become Prime Minister and Chief Justice.

As well as being the first university in New Zealand to teach law, Otago was the first university in Australasia to admit a woman law student, Ethel Benjamin, who enrolled in 1893 and graduated in 1897.

To celebrate the proud history of law at Otago and to gather with friends and colleagues, the Faculty is holding a conference, reunion and social events in Dunedin the week after Easter in 2023.

In conjunction with the event, a 30-year reunion of past and present members of Te Roopū Whai Pūtake (the Māori Law Students' Association) is also planned.

"The event will enable us to celebrate the past, give alumni the opportunity to recall their days at Otago, give us all an opportunity to reflect on the present and get ready for the next 150 years of Law@Otago," says Dean of Law, Professor Shelley Griffiths.

"It will give us the opportunity to get back in a room together, to catch up with old friends, make new ones, hear some interesting and spirited reflections on the law and have fun. We look forward to welcoming friends and colleagues."

Further information can be found at [otago.ac.nz/law150](http://otago.ac.nz/law150). A fundraising campaign for student scholarships and to support research is also planned.

To update your contact details with the Alumni office email: [database.alumni@otago.ac.nz](mailto:database.alumni@otago.ac.nz) 03 4798487 Please send any ideas or offers of support to the organiser: [john.dawson@otago.ac.nz](mailto:john.dawson@otago.ac.nz) or [law@otago.ac.nz](mailto:law@otago.ac.nz)

Yes, I would like to support the University of Otago and its ongoing programmes. Your gift can be directed to any one of the following areas:

- ☐ Scholarships  
☐ Research  
☐ Pūtea Tautoko Student Hardship Fund  
☐ Where the need is greatest  
☐ Other .....

### Amount of gift

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1000

or my choice is \$

### Payment options

1. Make a one-off donation or set up a monthly donation using our secure giving page at [otago.ac.nz/alumni/donate](http://otago.ac.nz/alumni/donate)
2. Charge my credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

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Expiry date: .....

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Signature: .....

### Leaving a bequest

- ☐ I would like information about including a gift to the University of Otago in my will.  
☐ I have already included a gift to the University of Otago in my will and would like to notify the Bequest Manager.

### For residents in the UK:

please visit [peoplesfundraising.com/donation/otago-university-trust](http://peoplesfundraising.com/donation/otago-university-trust) or email Chapel & York at [otago@chapel-york.com](mailto:otago@chapel-york.com)

**For residents in the USA** who wish to make a tax deductible donation: please visit [otagoalumni.us/donate-to-auoa](http://otagoalumni.us/donate-to-auoa) or email [treasurer@otagoalumni.us](mailto:treasurer@otagoalumni.us)

**For residents in New Zealand and rest of the world,** please send this form and your donation to:

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Dunedin 9054  
New Zealand

Name: .....

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



# Jamie's journey

Well-loved  
College Warden  
Jamie Gilbertson  
on life, work,  
health battles  
and retirement.

**JAMIE GILBERTSON:**  
“If my life is a glorious adventure, I’m  
closing a chapter, turning a page.”

**JAMIE GILBERTSON WAS** the person the University community often turned to when there was no roadmap, but he is charting his own path now, into retirement.

Asking people about the college warden who worked on the Dunedin campus for 20 years sparks everything from tributes to banter:

*“He’s one of the wisest and kindest people I know ... now I’m starting to get emotional.”*

*“He’s a cornerstone of our University.”*

*“He’s a support system for a giant moustache.”*

*“In challenging situations, no-one walks away with any less mana.”*

*“He’s larger than life. A character. He’s a real presence in a room – in a good way.”*

*“He’s a passionate University man.”*

*“He brings people together.”*

Some words keep cropping up: calm, fair, pragmatic, practical, a problem solver and fun.

All Gilbertson says is: “The University has been kind to me. The University has allowed me to be myself.”

With a background in the military and social work up to a national level, after his arrival on campus in 2002, Gilbertson quickly became a University-wide go-to for complex issues with young people, including some in unmapped territory not covered by policy or practice. That was recognised when he became Otago’s first Senior Warden for all the residential colleges in 2017.

The immigrant from South Wales who, with his parents and two brothers, escaped lack of opportunity by coming to New Zealand in 1957, had flags flying above Arana College in his honour as he exited the University in December – a Welsh dragon and a Christmas celebratory flag.

He also finished his career in an office metres from the University’s landmark Clocktower building: “How did that happen?,” he asks.

It was Gilbertson’s wife, Tina, who spotted the ad for the Arana warden’s job.

“Community leadership looked really attractive to me,” he says. It also offered him a chance to stop working during the week in Wellington away from a family that included three young sons.

“I gave myself over to college and University life. The best job I’ve ever had was being a college warden,” he says. “Young people coming to University and finding themselves, that’s where the



**JAMIE GILBERTSON**  
at the annual College  
Awards Gala Dinner.

“It didn’t feel like a job,  
it felt like a vocation.  
When you’re at the  
college, there’s always  
someone saying  
hello, opening a door,  
wanting to play a  
game, wanting to talk  
to you, having difficulty  
with their course,  
a broken bone or a  
broken heart, a death  
at home ... that’s  
where I can help.”

joy lives, and the challenge.”

While taking responsibility for hundreds of other people’s teenagers can involve working huge hours and never-ending multi-tasking, Gilbertson says he loved it.

“It didn’t feel like a job, it felt like a vocation. When you’re at the college, there’s always someone saying hello, opening a door, wanting to play a game, wanting to talk to you, having difficulty with their course, a broken bone or a broken heart, a death at home ... that’s where I can help.”

Gilbertson says the University gave him “unique opportunities” during his career, including being its voice, literally, on radio ads.

The opportunity to meet fantastic academics, professional staff, and students also came with the job, and so did being involved in the “really exciting” multi-million-dollar building project at Arana, which led to simultaneously opening three facilities for the 2006 year: Leithview for 60 residents, Rawiri for 100, and a new kitchen, dining room and common rooms.

The way Gilbertson and his management team handled the year of construction won them a University staff award for Exceptional Performance in 2006.

He was also on the Collegiate Way International Advisory Board, the University’s Board of Studies for Science Communication, the Ethical Behaviour Group, the Vice-Chancellor’s Code of Conduct Committee, the Stuart Residence Halls Council, the Limitation of Enrolment Committee and the team that wrote the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy.

If Gilbertson sounds grateful and reflective rather than in story-telling mode, he is. After successfully fighting prostate cancer in 2015 he was shocked in 2021 to discover he had colorectal cancer that had spread to his lung, sending him on a “huge and difficult journey” of radiotherapy, chemotherapy and surgery, with the distinct possibility he would die anyway.

“Lightning does strike twice. It was a very challenging first couple of weeks.”

Gilbertson thought he could distract

himself by continuing to work, but chemotherapy’s side effects took him off campus within three days. He had to make a conscious decision to set his attitude and give it his best.

“So I went for it. That was pretty much all I could do.”

From January until late September 2021 he did not know whether he would live or die, but now he is cancer free and has a new lease on life.

“I mean to make the most of it.”

His parting advice to students is be kind, work hard, try to make a difference, have a good time, don’t take yourself too seriously and if you have any low-level symptoms that could indicate a health problem, go to your doctor.

He and Tina – his partner, wise counsel, and support for 46 years – have moved onto her family’s orchard in Earnscleugh, to live in their own house with their own small cherry orchard.

They are surrounded by children, tractors, dogs and horses: “There’s always a horse looking at you or a dog trying to steal your sandwich.”

Tina is Dunstan Hospital’s nursing director and quality manager. Jamie is making himself useful. He is not a leader but continues to be of service in many capacities.

Two of Jamie’s sons are the Gilbertsons on campus now – Callum, a Property Services Division Facility Manager and Finn, a nurse at Student Health.

As for their dad? He is floating ideas of enhancing native bird life, promoting native plants, and getting rid of rodents. He loves taking a walk in the orchard every morning and riding his electric bike around the hills of Earnscleugh.

So think of him when there’s dew on the ground. He is outside in the crisp air, inhaling the earthy, damp smells of autumn, surrounded by bird song, and watching for the swoop of the local Kārearea (native falcon).

“If my life is a glorious adventure, I’m closing a chapter, turning a page.”

**GAIL GOODGER**



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