

Uni NEWS

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SEPTEMBER 2019



GEREMY HEMA

Kaiārahi drinking
from the wisdom of
his university whānau

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EMMA NEWBORN

The custodian of Old Government House whose cat gets more attention than her. But now it's Emma's turn to shine on stage.

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Why the path to affordable housing in Auckland could be unpopular and painful for some.

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SUVI NENONEN

Taking care of business and watching the movers and shapers.

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GLOWING WITH FITNESS

The Sport and Recreation centre lit up with neon for the annual Black Light Night in August. Around 200 students, staff and community members gathered in their neon and white clothing for the event. The glow-in-the-dark fitness party involved three group-fitness classes – Power Yoga, Pump, and Dance Fit, which were all run by the centre's fitness experts. There were dance-offs, paint stations, prizes and a whole lot of fun had.

Video of the event is at tinyurl.com/UoABlackLightNight. (For news about developments at the Rec Centre, see page 9.)



PASSION IN PERFORMANCE

The University's Chamber Choir performance of David Lang's *the little match girl passion* at St-Matthew-in-the-City in August was emotionally challenging but powerful. Based on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*, the bleak story is of a poor girl who tries to sell matches on the street and eventually freezes to death. The choir, led by conductor Associate Professor Karen Grylls, changed into winter clothes at the intermission. Karen says she wanted to challenge the 47 singers to tackle a minimalist score that needed considerable musical and story-telling skills.



APP COMBINES HISTORY AND TE REO

An interactive app has been launched that combines early Māori and Pākehā history with learning te reo Māori. The app, *Ko Wiriwiri rāua ko Kina*, is a collaboration between University of Auckland writer and researcher Dr Ruth Lemon and Kiwa Digital, a Māori-owned Auckland-based software developer that specialises in Indigenous language revitalisation. Designed in animated digital format, the story follows the adventures of two fictional girls, Wiriwiri and Kina, as they start school together in 1816. Read more at tinyurl.com/KiwaApp



LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

Is there life elsewhere? How did life begin? These are questions being posited at the Vice-Chancellor's Lecture Series this month. There are three lectures and a panel discussion (10 September) hosted by RNZ's Kim Hill. Dr David Bennett will talk about the search for evidence of extra-terrestrial life (5 September), Professor Maria-Paz Zorzano searches for alien life in the solar system (11 September) and Professor Richard Easther discusses everything from particles to people (13 September). All 6pm at Sir Owen G Glenn Building. See auckland.ac.nz/vclectures



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IT'S MĀORI LANGUAGE WEEK 9-15 SEPTEMBER

TE WIKI O TE REO MĀORI 9-15 MAHURU

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GEREMY HEMA

Geremy is the kaiārahi for Auckland UniServices Ltd.

What does a kaiārahi do and what's the difference between that and a kaiarataki?

Kaiārahi describes a person who advises and assists in Māori matters. There are a number of us all over the University. So in the Science faculty, you'd go straight to Jason Tutara; in Engineering you go to Catherine Dunphy. Quite often people will come to me because they're unaware they have a kaiārahi. The kaiarataki makes higher-level decisions spread right across the University. Our kaiarataki is Michael Steedman and his role is very broad. He also deputises for the Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori (Cindy Kiro) on committees and working groups.

What did you do before this role?

I was part time as a kaiārahi in the previous PVC Māori's office and part time in the Equity office. But then I took a year out to have a crack at being a lawyer in a large commercial law firm that has a Māori legal issues team dealing with Treaty settlements and post-settlement governance etc. It was great working with a team of sharp, young Māori lawyers assisting iwi in achieving the best for their members.

What did you study at university?

I did a BSc (Geography) in 2008, and an LLB, graduating in 2017. I'm also fluent in te reo.

It's Māori Language Week from 9 September, how did you learn te reo?

My paternal grandmother, my Nan, came to live with us. My mother's Irish and dad's Māori/French of Ngāti Paoa and Te Rarawa iwi. Nan grew up at a time when Māori really didn't start speaking English until they came to the city in the 1950s. For the most part she spoke Māori around my brother and me. She was a diabetic and quite crafty because Mum didn't have a clue what she was talking about when she spoke Māori so Nan would ask my brother and I, in Māori, to go down the road and get her contraband ... chocolates and lemonade.

What about at school?

I went to Stanmore Primary, then Orewa College and then boarded at Hāto Pētera College on the North Shore. Dad is Catholic and a Catholic education was important to him. I was heartbroken when Hāto Pētera closed because it

was a big part of my life and perfect preparation for a life of spiritual awareness. It was there I began driving for my uncle, the late Father (Pa) Henare Tate. He was an eminent scholar and priest. Over 20 years I had the privilege of driving him to hui and tangi. During school and university holidays, I worked in his office at Hāto Pētera. He was a giant in the Māori world and also our chief in our village of Motuti in the North Hokianga. When he died in 2017, thousands paid their respects. We miss him beyond belief, but he left us so much work to continue, we don't have time to feel sorry for ourselves.

How important is spirituality to you?

I thought about becoming a priest when I was younger. There were many great priests, nuns and brothers connected to our whānau and communities. They lived very simple lives and always seemed so happy and content in the company of their people, they brought them joy.

Which church do you align with now?

I've always been very ecumenical. So while I was a Catholic I was quite often invited by the Anglican Church to represent the Māori branch of the Catholic Church or to contribute to their events. I came out to friends and whānau while at university. Everyone was cool with it, even the church. But it did naturally present a couple of sacramental barriers. Over the years I drifted in the direction of the Māori branch of the Anglican Church. Their bishop, who's now my bishop, licensed me to be a lay minister. I still do tangi and house blessings and I'm on a roster to serve at church every weekend. It's great. It keeps you spiritually alive to be of use to others and to be Māori. The Anglican Church has been a kind and accommodating spiritual home for me. My husband Kurt and I were married in April and our union was blessed in my whānau's little Māori Anglican church, Te Toko Toru Tapu, Mātaitai, just south of Clevedon. I still keep strong links

with the Catholic Church. I'm chairperson of a Catholic Museum Trust that's building a museum in our little village of Motuti, where Bishop Pompallier's remains are interred and the likes of Aunty Whina Cooper come from. It's my hobby outside work, looking after Māori church things.

What does a blessing involve?

Friends moving into new flats often ask me to do a blessing and quite often they won't even know what they're asking for. They'll say 'can we have a karakia for our whare'? I lead a little blessing and whakawātea and it doesn't necessarily have to be because the house is new or because people feel there's something wrong with it. It's not because there could be a ghost or anything like that ... it's just to make people feel welcome in their space. I describe it like this: it's taking the opportunity to come together as human beings to offer a ritual of some kind to provide us with grace and peace to dedicate the house to its new purpose. At the University I have conducted them in offices left behind when people pass away. For new halls of residence we'll get in Ngāti Whatua to conduct a blessing.

When did you start here and do you like it?

Michael Steedman and I started on the same day in 2010. I was at the Waipapa marae recently for Michael's pōwhiri where he was formally inducted as the new kaiarataki, Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori. During the oratory a number of people were mentioned – Dr Ranginui Walker, Nin Tomas, Dr Takutai Wikiriwhi, Sir Hugh Kāwharu, Jonathan Mane-Wheoki. They're all people who've passed away and we were very close to them. It's not until you hear those names during the pōwhiri that you think to yourself 'this place allowed me to get to know them and drink from their wisdom'. So I feel really lucky for those opportunities and having a facility like the marae – a place that gives us life, right in the middle of the city.

Geremy Hema says the University has enabled him to 'drink from the wisdom' of others. Photo: Elise Manahan



QUICK-HIT BRAIN BOOSTS

If you're sitting down reading this, hopefully it's off the back of five minutes of high-intensity exercise.

Dr David Moreau from the School of Psychology has analysed 28 local and overseas

studies involving more than 1,000 people, that look at the effect of exercise on brain function. That includes our ability to plan, focus our attention, remember instructions and juggle multiple tasks.

Turns out, even short bursts of exercise are good for the brain.

"While the idea of exercising intensely for short periods has gained a lot of traction in recent years, the link between a shorter bout

of exercise and things like our ability to pay attention or memorise things has never been well understood," David says.

"Our analysis of all these studies found that high-intensity exercise does improve brain function in a similar way to longer periods of exercise."

Higher intensity exercise is generally regarded as exercise that is two-thirds of your maximum heart rate, while low exercise can be carried out comfortably for a longer period of time, typically more than 30 minutes.

The study indicates that beyond well-known effects on general fitness including cardiovascular health, high-intensity exercise can be the key to a healthier brain and sharper mind.

The research found the benefits were small but significant and consistent across age groups, gender and fitness levels.

David says the findings are useful for schools and workplaces or anyone forced to be sedentary for a large part of the day.

"One of the biggest barriers to exercise is that we don't have the time, or we tell ourselves we don't have the time, but this study shows all you need is a few minutes, perhaps repeated, a few times a week."

Read the full story: tinyurl.com/HIExercise

DISGUST DETERS DEGUST

When did we start needing the food we eat to look good? Why do apples have to be shiny? And carrots the perfect shape?

With around 50 percent of all food produce thrown away due to a 'cult of perfection', sustainability goals require a shift towards consumption of food that isn't 'perfect looking'.

Professor Nathan Considine from the Department of Psychological Medicine in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Sheffield research fellow Dr Philip Powell and University of Surrey senior lecturer Dr Chris Jones have published a study in the journal *Food Quality and Preference* that involved more than 500 participants. They were shown pairs of 'normal' and 'alternative-looking' products via an online survey. These were fruits, vegetables and insect-based foods, but also drinks with ingredients reclaimed from sewage or medicines with ingredients extracted from sewage. The aim was to explore how much the "yuck factor" influences consumer habits.

"Disgust is a basic emotional reaction that

evolved to motivate the avoidance of potential contaminants – you could think of it as originally being a 'don't eat that' emotion," says Nathan.

Participants were asked how much they would be willing to pay for the alternative products, and to rate the pairs in terms of which was tastier, healthier, more natural, visually appealing and nutritional. Results provided the strongest evidence yet that disgust puts people off sustainable alternatives and offered some clues as to why – and to how marketers could counteract the 'yuck factor'.

Even after taking into account pro-environmental attitudes, the researchers found people who get grossed out more easily (technically, have a greater 'disgust propensity') were less willing to pay for 'weird-looking' products. People's evaluations of the alternative products partly explained this. For fruit and vegetables, it was anticipated taste, visual appeal and perceived naturalness that drove feelings of disgust; for reclaimed sewage-based products, it was the perceived health risk and naturalness; for insect-based products, the perceived taste and naturalness.

Nathan has been studying the role of emotions – particularly disgust – in health for nearly two decades. He says the implications

for marketers are clear. "Targeting the sort of evaluations people make about food may be one way to increase people's willingness to pay for atypical food products. These products are nutritionally as valuable as their typical counterparts, may be more 'natural', and have environmental advantages in terms of their production. Emphasising this to consumers may be a good place to start. Similarly, given that exposure tends to reduce disgust over time, plenty of free samples and in-store tasting may help increase consumption."



IN TUNE WITH TECHNOLOGY

Understanding how technology applies to music is an emerging area of both research and teaching at the School of Music. It's the specialty of Dr Fabio Morreale, lecturer and coordinator of Music Technology, who joined the School this year.

Fabio did his BSc in computer science at the University of Verona, Italy, but began combining computer science and guitar-playing at masters level. He completed his PhD in Human-Computer Interaction in relation to music technology at the University of Trento, Italy.

One of the many possibilities offered by technology is the creation of new musical interfaces that lead to new ways of playing traditional instruments. A few years back, Fabio created the Magpick, a guitar pick that senses subtle hand movements and transmits the signal to a pedal board, allowing for a much more nuanced control of guitar sounds.

"Traditionally, guitar sounds are created when you pluck and then release the string," he says.

The sounds of the electric guitar can also be manipulated with pedal boards, but that involves using feet "and we don't have a lot of dexterity in our feet".



Fabio Morreale with his Magpick, a tiny example of technology's impact on musicians. Photo: Elise Manahan

"With the Magpick you can modify the sound of the guitar, with subtle movements of your plucking hand above the strings, without touching them."

It was so popular with guitar players that he and his team considered manufacturing it. "But we're not really entrepreneurially minded people."

Fabio says technology has long been used in music production, but is now increasingly used in composition, performance, musical analysis and music education.

He and Associate Professor David Lines,

Coordinator of Music Education, are beginning a research project looking at all the apps claiming to be able to teach people how to play a musical instrument without years of theory or practical learning.

Do they actually work? "They might teach you to play the right note at the right time," says Fabio.

"But that's five percent of playing music. We need to find out if they really are an effective way of learning music."

Read more: tinyurl.com/UoAMusicTech

INSTAGRAM BEAUTY MYTH

New research being undertaken by PhD student Anna Vasilyeva explores the beauty myth in the Instagram age.

Anna's doctoral thesis looks at how women are represented across a range of media and how these idealised images affect their ideas about beauty and themselves.

The Faculty of Education and Social Work student conducted 32 in-depth interviews with 16 female students aged 19 to 24 at the University, who originally came from a number of countries. The interviews were divided into two parts: one focused on participants' ideas about beauty, body image and beauty rituals in their home countries, and the other gauged their 'media literacy', particularly in relation to the authenticity of celebrity images.

Many said "skinny" was part of their ideal body image and Anna says few realised that virtually all the celebrity images she showed them had been digitally enhanced. "I asked them to 'use words as a brush to paint their ideal portrait of themselves'. Words like 'thin, perfect skin, small nose and

perfect make-up' came up so often. I was also really shocked that so many didn't realise how much manipulation goes into the images they are comparing themselves with."

She says another question, "do you think beautiful people are better off in life?" got an almost uniform 'yes' from participants.

A real concern she noted, and which she believes is connected to the explosion of Instagram influencers, is parents buying into ideals of beauty. "One South Korean woman told me some parents are paying for cosmetic surgery as a university graduation present for their daughters. The pressure in Asian countries ... to look a certain way is immense."

Ironically, she says she was struck by how 'beautiful' in the widest sense of the word, the young women were. "They are all strong, smart and confident, and many of them see social media not just as an insidious way of promoting idealised images, but as a forum for resisting and subverting these ideas as well."

Anna, who is originally from Russia, did a degree in English and French linguistics at Moscow State Forest University before her masters in global communication at Bangkok University. She hopes to complete her doctorate by November. See: tinyurl.com/BeautyIdeals

Anna Vasilyeva is shocked at the young women's perceptions of beauty.

Photo: Elise Manahan



WARREN MORAN

17 August 1936 – 13 August 2019

Emeritus Professor Warren Moran was a celebrated scholar, inspiring teacher, ever-supportive colleague, a widely respected leader and a passionate and fierce disciplinary champion.

In his early days Warren was also a stalwart of the Waitemata Rugby Club and played representative rugby for Auckland from 1958-60 (Cap #863) alongside such luminaries as Waka Nathan, Bob Graham and 'Snow' White.

He completed an undergraduate and masters degree in Geography in the mid to late 1950s. His masters thesis on the development of Auckland's wine industry began a career-long engagement with terroir as a concept that allowed him to tease out, explain, and theorise the relationships between people and land. Warren asked questions about the ways people use land to create livelihoods, wealth and nationhood. He offered answers that highlighted both the interplay of economic, cultural and physical processes, and the idiosyncrasies of individuals, the politics of place and the serendipities of investment in land.

Warren taught geography in Toronto and at Henderson and Rutherford High Schools. From there he joined the University's Geography Department as a lecturer in 1968, completing his PhD in 1976. He was made professor in 1981, and went on to supervise multiple masters and PhD students, and to head the department.

In the 1980s, he worked on projects examining urban and regional development in Auckland and conducted impactful research with government agencies. His work with our wine industry, and research in France, underpinned his internationally influential papers on terroir, economy and wine appellations.

From 1993-1997 Warren served as the first executive Dean of Arts before returning to Geography, winning a Marsden Grant and a James Cook Fellowship to explore human-nature relations in the development of the NZ wine industry, work that culminated in his legacy book *NZ Wine: the Land, the Vines, the People*, a finalist in the 2017 Ockham Book Awards.

Warren earned numerous international awards and was made Fellow of the Royal Society of NZ and of the Société de Géographie, France 1998. He was awarded the inaugural Distinguished Geographer medal by the NZ



Geographical Society, its highest honour. He was also elected senior vice-president of the International Geographical Union. Only ill health prevented him becoming its president.

Yet Warren the geographer was much more. He was the friend with whom there was always another glass of wine or beer to enjoy; the colleague whose hotel room floor you could crash on at international conferences; the extraordinary mentor who taught and led with enormous generosity; the Dean who would still attend Geography Students Association annual barbecues; the Professor whose door was always open for a reassuring talk; and the Emeritus Professor who would walk through any open door and never leave.

Colleagues and former students remember him most clearly in the field – always a charismatic presence, gesturing at paddocks, forests and landscapes and holding forth authoritatively, passionately and at great length from beneath his blue floppy hat. They recall his unbridled curiosity about the worlds around him and his untameable enthusiasm for leaping into them; his enormous joie de vivre and his humour, humility and collegiality.

Warren was the quintessential New Zealand geographer. He took us from the study of 'what places are like' to a richer, broader knowledge project, and from a colonial discipline to one that recognises what it means to contribute meaningfully to a 21st-century Aotearoa. As New Zealand reimagines itself, and the University and its geographers search for ways to best help it navigate its future, we already miss his guidance.

He is survived by Pauline, his children Michael, Bridget and Kate and many mokopuna.

■ Nicolas Lewis, Associate Professor, Science

THE BUSINESS OF SHAPING MINDS AND MARKETS

As the University's MBA programme gets a refresh, Suvi Nenonen is 'smashing' it in business research.

Professor Suvi Nenonen will have been in New Zealand seven years this December, but there's no fear of a seven-year itch.

"Definitely not. We love it here. Kiwis are so genuine and warm. And, compared to the Finns, so optimistic."

She's not talking about our musical brothers Finn, but her homeland Finland. And the 'we' she's referring to is her partner, Professor Kaj Storbacka. The two are professors in the Business School and also collaborate on a lot of research.

"We talk shop over dinner," Suvi says. "It's wonderful to be able to have really difficult conversations with somebody who actually understands and doesn't get annoyed."

"We also research together so that 'Kaj Storbacka' name you often see in my co-authored publications, is him. Yes, sometimes it's annoying that you can't ever get away from your job but having somebody there who you trust implicitly when you're trying to tackle these challenging questions, is also a blessing."

Kaj arrived in New Zealand two years before Suvi, as a visiting professor for six months. Suvi, who has won teaching awards in her homeland, decided to follow.

"I know it's a cliché but I love the great outdoors here. We like tramping and sailing. I came here on a fixed-term contract initially but I genuinely like to contribute to where I am living and where I'm working. So I hope they saw that. Anyway, I'm still here!"

The two countries have some similarities, in population size, for example. "Also Auckland in January is exactly the same as Helsinki in July ... there's nobody there because everybody vanishes to summer houses."

As well as research papers, Suvi has written several business articles and books. In her most recent book, *SMASH: Using Market Shaping to Design New Strategies for Innovation, Value Creation and Growth*, she apologises to her editor for what she calls her "Finnglish".

"It's a reflection of the fact that I really like language. I really like communication. And when you are using your second language you're painfully aware that you're not quite as elegant and precise as you were in your mother tongue."

Also the fact that her father was a journalist for the Finnish equivalent of the *Financial Times* probably adds some pressure.

“I’ve grown up with my father hammering on a typewriter. I have a love-hate relationship with writing and I don’t find the process easy.

“But I find writing really helps you polish your thinking. I only start deciding whether my idea makes any sense after I’ve written it down.

“And then you can start arguing with it and polishing it.”

She describes her research as that of a social scientist. From 2014 to 2016, she and her collaborative researchers around the world talked to the leaders of 21 market-shaping companies in-depth, in more than 80 interviews. The research was enabled by a 2013 Marsden Fund Grant from the Royal Society of NZ.

So what is market shaping? Think Uber and, for the opposite, think Nokia’s fall from grace with its mobile phones. Nokia, from Suvi’s homeland, plummeted from its position as market leader because it failed to see that the changing landscape of mobile telephony emphasised ecosystems and apps, not just the devices themselves. (It’s more complicated than that but you can actually read the book tinyurl.com/SMASHpdf.)

Suvi’s research has found that market shapers tend to be companies led by entrepreneurs or people with an entrepreneurial mindset – they don’t accept the status quo and want to spark change.

“The other over-represented group was co-operatives, especially consumer co-operatives. I suspect that’s because they are very attuned to figuring out what their customers need.”

In 2018 Suvi won the Business School Research Excellence Award for outstanding strategic impact in research, which followed on from her 2015 Research Excellence Award for research relevance.

The next research focus will be around how to use market-shaping strategies for improved sustainability. “It’s really important that if you want to shape the market, you have to be able to come up with a win-win-win vision so that everybody in your market system benefits from the change that you’re trying to drive.

“Often we don’t consider society or the environment or the planet. So I’m just really curious about whether we could create toolkits to address some of the sustainability challenges facing our generation.

“Simply greenwashing doesn’t really help. We genuinely have to look at our business models so that they would be a win for all sides and a win for the environment.”

And while research is important to her role as director of the Graduate School of Management, she’s also been teaching Strategic Management



“We genuinely have to look at our business models so that they would be a win for all sides.”

Professor Suvi Nenonen is fascinated by the concept of ‘market shaping’. Photo: Elise Manahan

for the Executive MBA. That’s about to change a bit, as the Business School’s MBA programme gets a refresh this month.

“We are launching a new MBA programme in September,” she says. (Business runs its year in quarters not semesters.)

“So Strategic Management will be broken into multiple papers because in the new MBA we are walking away from having one paper in management, one in accounting and one in marketing,” she says.

“We are looking at actual managerial dilemmas as in ‘I have to understand my operating environment’. So we are bringing in an economist and a legal expert – it’s a collaborative approach to teaching.

“Another paper closely related to the paper I am teaching is about how you use your organisational capabilities to your advantage, which is basically the essence of strategy. So we have a strategy person and a marketing person talking about these things.

“Our colleagues came together and thought ‘OK, if we wanted to make a really cool MBA, what would it look like?’ And one of the themes we were really passionate about was that it should be a bit more contemporary than ‘101 in marketing’ and ‘101 in finance’.”

Most people do the MBA part time and about 50 graduate with an MBA from Auckland every year. The type of person who does the degree is usually a very good business specialist but only in their silo.

“And they have ambition that ‘hey, I would like to become a general manager or take more substantial board positions. But to do that I have

to understand all the other disciplines where I’m not an expert.

“So this gives people the confidence to talk about things that are outside their area of expertise. So a marketer can have a sensible conversation with their legal counsel, for example.”

Suvi’s also pleased to note that there’s going to be a separate elective course about market making and shaping.

“As our Marsden research identified, market shaping is important for an economy like New Zealand,” she says.

But market shapers need to ‘know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold em’ as Kenny Rogers would say.

“The biggest insight has been the balance or tension in trying to change something in a system. You can’t know how the system will react so you have to experiment and fail fast and accept that some of your experiments are not going to go anywhere or consider that these market-shaping strategies tend to be multi-year processes – four, five, six or seven years, even decades.”

But even if you do have a bad period, as Nokia did, know that you can come back.

“Yes it is possible that you missed the boat. That probably happened to Nokia. However they now have a thriving networks business. So when they realised they hadn’t read the market, they sold their mobile phone business even though it was probably emotional and painful.

“The company focused on their successful network and technology business and is still the largest company in Finland.”

■ Denise Montgomery

NGĀ MEA HOU

BOOKS SET SAIL FOR TONGA

University staff, students, alumni and supporters responded overwhelmingly to a call for quality used books for the charity Books4Tonga.

Around 7,000 books were collected during the University's inaugural Volunteer Impact Week (VIW) in June, and are now being shipped to Tonga to help children and adults enhance their skills in reading, writing and speaking English.

Books4Tonga founder Cynthia Wallis Barnicoat says the University's response to the book drive was fantastic. "The people of Tonga greatly respect education but there is very little access to good reading material. Books in the schools are often quite old. Tongans know that enhancing their English skills can bring better futures but for many, books are unaffordable."

The donations will see 20 new libraries brimming with donated books. The village libraries will be based in a home or community space, run by local volunteers.



Joel Terwilliger and Cynthia Wallis Barnicoat.

Alumni Relations Manager Joel Terwilliger says he was thrilled that the University could contribute to Books4Tonga, and he was looking forward to seeing the volunteering initiative grow in coming years.

"It saw our University community stepping up and working together to contribute to social and environmental issues in Aotearoa New Zealand, but also in communities around the world."

The Books4Tonga drive originated in the Business School in 2018 and resulted in a container load of books being sent to Tonga. Teaching Fellow Sione Taufua and Group Services team leader Herena Newall had made a casual call for books and the project gained momentum from there. You can find out more about Books4Tonga at books4tonga.org

STUDENT SURVEY

The annual Learning and Teaching Survey goes to a representative sample of 10,000 students on 23 September.

The survey runs until 13 October and the University's Quality Office says there are benefits to encouraging students to fill it out. The results can lead to policy changes and infrastructure investments, such as improvements to lecture theatres, to the lecture 'capture and release' policy, WiFi and other facilities.

Around 3,800 students have responded each year for the past three years, but the

Quality Office would like to increase the response rate in 2019, and they're offering the chance to win prizes to those who have their say.

The confidential survey is done through Qualtrics and participants are invited through their University email addresses.

PowerPoint slides about the survey can be shown in class, and these will also be displayed on screens around the faculties.

Around 85 percent of students in the past two years have said they found their University programme intellectually stimulating and that teaching staff are helpful and considerate.

Read more at auckland.ac.nz/survey

CHANGES AT RESEARCH CENTRE

Associate Professor Michael Hay has some stellar shoes to fill when he becomes the new Director of the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre (ACSRC) within the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences.

With 30 years' experience in medicinal chemistry and cancer drug development, he's been chosen to lead the centre, and will sit alongside outgoing directors Distinguished Professor Bill Denny and Professor Bill Wilson from 1 September, before taking the reins in January. Emeritus Professor Bruce Baguley has already retired.

Michael first joined the ACSRC as a Research Fellow in 1991. Dean of FMHS, Professor John Fraser, says he's delighted that he's been able to appoint someone from within the centre. "Michael is an outstanding medicinal chemist and a respected senior member of ACSRC. Most importantly, he convinced the selection panel that he understood what would be needed for future success following on from the impressive legacy of Bill Denny's Directorship leadership."

Bill Denny will stay at the University part-time to continue his cancer research work.

SEMINAR FOR PARENTS

Falling nicely into Mental Health Awareness Week is a seminar for staff who are parents trying to juggle work and their offspring.

It's being run by the Equity Office, Te Ara Tautika, with Human Resources and the Tertiary Education Union who regularly hold seminars for staff who are parents. It's also for parents of students, and will provide ideas on how to help them manage their study pressure.

The two speakers are from the School of Psychology. Dr Lixin Jiang's talk covers evidence-based strategies to help staff cope with work-life conflict. Associate Professor Kerry Gibson's talk will help parents of students better understand the pressures children face during their studies. Prue Toft, director of Staff Equity, will outline the support provided by the University in these areas.

WHEN: Wednesday 11 September, 1-2pm

WHERE: ClockTower, Building 105, Room O18

ENQUIRIES: equity@auckland.ac.nz or intranet

**HAVE
YOUR SAY
& WIN!**

Be in to WIN one of three iPad Air 256 with keyboard cover or one of 15 PowerBanks

2019 STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING SURVEY

●●● Just check your email or Canvas between 23.9 - 13.10 to see if you've been selected ●●●



The Recreation and Wellness Centre should be completed by 2023. (Design concept by Warren and Mahoney + MJMA)

FIT-FOR-PURPOSE FACILITY ON THE WAY

The project to transform the new Recreation Centre on the City Campus to a modern Recreation and Wellness Centre is on track.

The preliminary design is complete and the project team is now working on a detailed design. It's business as usual for the current Rec Centre for the rest of the 2019 academic year, as demolition won't begin until 2020. In Semester One, 2020, an interim Rec Centre will open at 70 Stanley Street next to the ASB Tennis Arena, approximately ten minutes' walk from the current location. These premises have been refurbished to offer comparable services. The project team is still working on developing

a replacement sports hall, with a suitably sized court, so in the interim in Semester One people can still use the current sports hall.

Information has been sent to all members of the Recreation Centre, as well as student-led Clubs, explaining the changes. There are also proposed floor plans and artist's impressions of the new centre. The Recreation and Wellness Centre is expected to be up and running by 2023.

■ Read more: tinyurl.com/UoARecCentre

THE SKILL OF DISTILLATION

Reading the title of some thesis proposals for subjects you're unfamiliar with, you can suffer a serious case of 'glaze over'.

But when it's Three Minute Thesis time, the aim is to cut through the complicated stuff and sell your subject matter to a curious general audience. On Friday 9 August, 11 postgraduates poked their noses out of their books to perform against the clock – and each other – at the Three Minute Thesis final. If you haven't heard about it before, students present their entire research projects to a crowd – in a little longer than it takes to get your two-minute noodles ready.

Yi-Han Wu, from the Auckland Bioengineering Institute, was the victor with a sparkling presentation of his research on 'Recreating the tissue and cell damage after traumatic brain injury in vitro and in silico'. As well as prizes including \$500, a Citizen watch, a \$300 STA travel voucher and a ConfereNZ pass, he won the opportunity to further disseminate his research. He'll represent Auckland in the

U21 3MT® virtual competition in September and the 3MT® Asia-Pacific Final at the University of Queensland in October. (3MT® is a global research communication competition.)

Proving brains and personality mix, Yi-Han also won the People's Choice Award.

"I tried my best just to focus on my own performance rather than the prizes because I knew focusing on what I could control was the only thing I could do to best prepare myself for the competition," he says.

But that didn't mean he wasn't feeling the pressure. "Despite all my preparation I was

still surprised by how nervous I was, probably because I knew what was at stake. But when the crowd received me warmly, even before I started, it made me feel excited more than anything else."

The doctoral runner-up prize went to James Hucklesby for his presentation 'Stroke Busters: how does plasmin protect your brain?'

The masters category was won by Engineering student Pransh Rana who went on to compete in the NZ Masters Final on 22 August in Dunedin.

■ Read more: tinyurl.com/Winners3MT and watch the video at tinyurl.com/Yi-HanWu-ABI



Doctoral winner of the Three Minute Thesis final, Yi-Han Wu (left), and masters winner Pransh Rana.



The custodian at Old Government House, Emma Newborn, with her famous feline sidekick, Governor Grey. Photo: Elise Manahan

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE CAT

Emma Newborn hits the stage for *Coral*, a solo comedy show starting on 3 September at the Basement Theatre. But she's more used to sharing the limelight with a cat.

Emma is the live-in custodian of Old Government House (OGH) and her famous sidekick is Governor Grey, a noble, attention-seeking, crooked-legged, grey Burmese, who can be found schmoozing students, staff and visitors. Or ignoring them completely. After all, he's a cat.

"He's definitely not a shy cat. He gets more airtime than I do," Emma laughs, from the comfy, quirky lounge of her two-bedroom apartment at the top of OGH. While maze-solving skills are required to get to her abode, for Governor Grey it's just a trip up the fire-escape, onto a roof and a slinky move through a cat-door set in a window.

He's partial to catching rats and bringing them in, sometimes twice a day, so Emma has had to make things trickier for him to enter with his catch-of-the-day. She's devised a way in which he needs to drop his prey before entering.

Emma has been Governor Grey's owner for around seven years and thinks he's probably around 12 years old. The stray found her, as cats are wont, and despite an exhaustive search for his owner, Governor Grey adopted Emma.

"He was scraggy and skinny and very lost. He

got lucky here and people love him don't they? It's amazing. I see people down in the carpark in summer and he'll put himself right in the middle of that driveway just to get optimum pats."

Governor Grey arrived not long after Emma took the job at OGH, after what was meant to be a three-month trip back to New Zealand following a decade studying and working in theatre in the UK and Australia.

"While I was in the UK, I made three short films about a hobbit who was stuck in London, and I won a competition. The prize was a flight to New Zealand and I thought I'd go back for three months.

"I had a solo show in the Fringe Festival in Auckland and then all these things just happened. I met Amelia, who I now perform regularly with in another show called *The Bitches' Box*, and I got a job working as a puppeteer for the Rugby World Cup. It all just snowballed and then my ticket expired."

She says the custodian job was a case of being in the right place at the right time. A good friend was doing her PhD in the Thomas Building and told her about the position. "She said 'I think you'd be really good at it'. It was the first time in 23 years that the job had come up. Someone had come in after the previous long-term person but left after a year. "It's been perfect for me and a great place to write. I wrote this solo show *Coral* here and I'm always working on something. I'm trying some screenwriting now.

"It's very social as well. Being right in the

middle of town, people can come and stay and they love it. I just love the building and it's such a privilege to help look after it. It's so beautiful. You look out every window at the greenery."

Emma grew up in Avondale and Blockhouse Bay, watching comedy such as *Fawlty Towers* and *Monty Python*. "Silly stuff. Usually British. Stuff Dad liked."

Her quirky comedy *Coral* sees Emma on stage alone for around 50 minutes as Coral Kristofferson, an office administrator from Swanson with a penchant for carpet underlay.

"*Coral* is based on a situation from when I was in seventh form. I was too late in organising my work experience so my school shipped me out to an office job in a company that made carpet underlay. I just sat there for two weeks and printed out labels. I would go home every night to my parents and I was amazed people could work in an office like that their whole lives.

"So that got me thinking about mind-numbing workplaces and who works there and how do they find joy and happiness in that?"

When Emma went to England aged 19, the kernel of the story grew.

"I was working at a printing company and I learned this woman's job in a morning. She had been there since she was 16 and was well into her thirties. She had two kids and went to Majorca every summer and she was one of the most contented, happy people I've ever met. I started to explore how that could be."

She first performed the sell-out show at the

New Zealand International Comedy Festival in May, but says this is a different show.

“Trygve Wakenshaw is a very good friend and works all over the world as a brilliant clown. He’s helped me develop it because it was quite an experiment for me performing alone. I want to ramp it up.”

She tested the first version of *Coral* on friends, inviting them to OGH to watch her run through it. She says her typical audience is very much the comedy festival crowd. “They’re the people who go to Snort at the Basement every Friday night ... they take a punt on shows. The Basement has done an incredible job of building the most amazing comedy community. Comedy in Auckland has become very professional.”

She says solo performance requires the audience to become your friend.

“That’s what I’m really interested in ... that relationship between audience and performer.”

She’s also involved in creating the set. “I like all aspects of a production. When I was doing *The Bitches’ Box*, which is on pause at the moment while my fellow performer is off having babies, our roadshow was in woolsheds and we did everything – we even ran the bar.”

Her custodian job also involves running the bar at OGH. “Sometimes it can feel a bit all-consuming but then other times nothing really happens.”

And she uses her gift of the gab to good effect as a celebrant too. “I’ve married about 50 couples since becoming a celebrant five years ago, but I tend not to seek out funerals,” she says. “If you muck up something at a funeral you can really upset people as it’s the last thing they remember about a person. Also, you only have a few days to prepare for it.”

So with a finger in various performance pies, what does she call herself when she fills out airport arrival forms?

“I make stuff, so I write ‘maker’.”

Makes sense.

■ Denise Montgomery

WHAT: Coral

WHERE: The Basement, Lower Greys Avenue

WHEN: 3-7 September

WEB: tinyurl.com/CoralBasement



Late-night efforts for the 48 Hour Film Festival.

NOTHING CRUMMY ABOUT TOAST

Media Productions (aka Missing Pixels) has taken out second runner-up in the 2019 48 Hours Film Festival.

Their film *Toast* was chosen as one of Sir Peter Jackson’s wildcards, and then came third overall out of the 530 teams that entered.

The genre the team was given was ‘real time’ movie. There were various compulsory elements that needed to be included – wind, laughter, a double-take and an overhead shot. Team members Pete Gedye, Jethro Martin, Richard Smith, Nic Smith and Folko Boermans came up with concept of putting a piece of bread in the toaster to see what happened in the time it took for it to pop up. As per the rules, they had 48 hours to write, shoot and edit the short film. See more about the 48 Hours competition here: tinyurl.com/48HoursComp

■ You can watch *Toast* at vimeo.com/347987074

CREATIVE CHAT

A Creative Conversation about the Arts and Wellbeing

Professor Peter O’Connor of the Creative Thinking Project facilitates a discussion about the power and possibilities of the arts.

The panellists are contributors to a book called *Headlands: New Stories of Anxiety*. They are its editor, journalist Naomi Arnold, Hinemoana Baker, Creative NZ’s Berlin Writer in Residence in 2016, Associate Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh, NZ Poet Laureate 2017-2019 and writer Bonnie Etherington.

DATE 16 September

TIME 5.30pm

WHERE Room 029, The Clock Tower, 22 Princes Street

RSVP artswellbeing.eventbrite.co.nz

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‘The path to affordable housing will be particularly unpopular and painful for some.’ – Dr Michael Rehm

THE PRICE OF AFFORDABILITY

New Zealand is the second most overvalued housing market in the world, with Auckland its most unaffordable city, writes Dr Michael Rehm.

Auckland was not always unaffordable. At the 1966 Census the \$9,900 average Auckland home price was just under three times the average household income. A price-to-income ratio of three generally represents the upper threshold of housing affordability. However, in June 2018 the median home price stood at \$850,000, more than eight times the median household income. Housing markets with price-to-income ratios exceeding five are considered ‘severely unaffordable’.

It is common for home ownership to come at a cost premium to renting. In 1966, the weekly mortgage payment for the average house price was 34 percent higher than the rent paid for the same home. However in 2018 this premium had risen to 112 percent despite similar interest rates. A key reason is the financialisation of housing. The family home now serves a dual purpose as shelter and investment. The home has been redefined as an object of speculation.

While housing speculation is somewhat veiled in the owner-occupant housing submarket, it is obvious with rental property. An unpublished analysis of 2016 leveraged rental home purchases in Auckland found that 80 percent are ‘negatively geared’ and operate at a loss. The remaining 20 percent are estimated to generate positive cash flows but rental yields fall below prevailing term deposit rates. Effectively these ‘investments’ cannot stand on their own merits

and are predicated on future capital gains to justify the purchase.

The Auckland housing market is caught in a cycle of speculation and has become a casino. Investors bet squarely on capital gains. As investors represent a substantial share of home purchasers in Auckland, an effective anti-speculation housing policy targeted at this group will likely go a long way to winding down the casino and re-establishing housing affordability. Policymakers have recently ring-fenced rental property losses thereby cutting off hundreds of millions worth of annual tax rebates to negatively geared investors. This will help but it does not go far enough. Unfortunately, the government rejected the Tax Working Group’s cornerstone recommendation for a comprehensive capital gains tax.

There is, however, a long-standing, but unused, statute that is arguably a more just and effective anti-speculation policy tool than the abandoned capital gains tax. The Income Tax Act’s ‘intention test’ is laid out in section CB6 and deals with the acquisition of property for the purpose of making profit through resale. The IRD and Treasury have formally admitted that speculating property investors are gaming the tax system and are opting not to report profits from resale despite capital gains being a genuine motive to purchase. Our analysis developed a novel, evidence-based approach to operationalise the intention test and enable the IRD to enforce the existing law.

Aside from investors, lenders also actively speculate in the housing market. Finance professionals are aware when approving new investment mortgages that these rental properties are incapable of generating adequate rental yields and that many assets they lend on operate at a loss. According to the Reserve Bank

only eight percent of households own investment properties but they account for 40 percent of housing debt. This small minority of households forms a disproportionate share of banks’ business and their profits.

Accentuating their own speculative behaviour, lenders have shown an acute eagerness to extend interest-only mortgages on these so-called investments. Interest-only loans account for more than half of new lending on rental property. These loan types are risky and are associated with housing speculation. When the whirlpool of speculation was forming, lenders served as willing accomplices.

So contrary to views expressed by politicians and pundits, the main driving force behind unaffordable housing is not a mismatch between housing supply and the need for shelter but the financialisation of housing. In particular, lenders’ willingness to extend increasing amounts of mortgage debt in proportion to borrower income has facilitated Auckland’s severely unaffordable house prices.

If society desires affordable housing it must implore its political representatives to enforce the existing anti-speculation ‘intention test’. Furthermore the government should be urged to support the Reserve Bank Governor as he undertakes a more intensive and intrusive regulatory approach including heightened capital ratios and a debt-to-income limit tool.

The path to affordable housing will be particularly unpopular and painful for some but a controlled descent is better than a crash landing.

■ Dr Michael Rehm is a senior lecturer in property at the University of Auckland Business School.

The views in this article reflect personal opinion and are not necessarily those of the University of Auckland.