

Seminar series exploits diversity



Left to right are Dr Swarna Gamage with Dr Genevieve Evans and Dr Shaun Lott, who are collaborating on the "Chemical validation of a drug target in M. Tuberculosis." Photographed by Warren Jones

What do you get when you gather a roomful of eminent researchers in diverse but related disciplines and invite one group to present to the others on their current investigations?

What you get is a rich environment for generating knowledge, inspiring discussion and laying the base for future contacts and collaborations.

This is the highly successful format of an ongoing seminar series introduced by Biopharma Thematic Research Initiative, one of three University of Auckland TRIs officially launched by Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon at the Celebration of Research Excellence held in May.

As confirmed by participants, the format works extremely well.

Dr Shaun Lott (School of Biological Sciences), who presented at the first seminar, said he found the exchanges intellectually challenging and extremely valuable in "sparking new thoughts" in relation to the team's work on possible new therapeutic approaches to TB.

"The seminar brought together a huge range of expertise," said Shaun. "Among those attending were eminent chemists, microbiologists, clinicians

and drug creators from inside and outside the University. Their questions and comments made us think in complex ways and from new perspectives."

One direct outcome for the team has been two valued contacts. During the discussion there was mention of an Auckland District Health Board group involved in tuberculosis testing and a researcher from Harvard University (already known to Shaun by repute) who is also investigating enzymes implicated in the disease. Shaun and his team have since made contact with both.

Presenting the second seminar in the series, held on 13 August at the Medical School in Grafton, were Professor Jillian Cornish, Professor Ian Reid and Associate Professor Andrew Grey (School of Medicine) and Professor Bill Denny (Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre), speaking on "Milk-derived fatty acids as potential bone resorption inhibitors – a novel class of anti-osteoporotic drugs?"

The subsequent discussion, stimulating, lively and robustly in tune with the aims of the series, included not only agreements but disagreements, requests for clarification or qualification, competing hypotheses and questioning of logic.

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Key events

Parenting

The Equity Office, in response to staff requests, has organised an informal workshop entitled "Are you thinking of combining parenting and a career at the University?"

This will be held from 1-3pm on Thursday 9 September in the Presentation Room (204), Level 2, ClockTower. For more information see "In brief" on page 3.

Health

HealthX 2010 will see more than 100 entrants in the fields of biomedicine, population health and medicine competing for \$8,000 worth of prizes. The student-organised conference is in its third year and the 2010 event is shaping up to be the best yet. The aim of HealthX is to promote research activity and presentation among both undergraduate and postgraduate students associated with the wider Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. HealthX 2010 will be held on 10 September at the Grafton Campus, FMHS. For more information, see www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/faculty/healthx

Innovation

Dr Rick Boven, Director of the New Zealand Institute, and Professor Cris Shore from the Department of Anthropology will speak on Wednesday 15 September on "New Zealand's untapped potential: The innovation agenda". This will be the third in a series of free public lectures entitled "New Zealand: Realising our potential". Associate Professor Michael Mintrom (Political Studies), coordinator of the Master of Public Policy Programme, says: "Auckland, New Zealand's soon-to-be Super City, has the opportunity to become the powerhouse where New Zealand's most significant policy thinking occurs. This ongoing seminar series reflects the University's role as conscience and critic of society and highlights its place as a centre for non-partisan, big-thinking, agenda-setting policy meetings."

The seminar will take place from 12.30-2pm in the Women's Federation Room at Old Government House.

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Although our Strategic Plan objective of doubling external research income to \$270 million per annum over the period 2005 to 2012 is extremely challenging, we have done very well in making progress towards that target.

As reported recently to Council and Senate, we anticipate reaching \$210 million this year, despite the difficult environment for public and private expenditure created by the global financial crisis.

A further impediment to reaching that goal – which is not really about money, but about our ability to grow our research capability and outputs to those of the leading universities internationally – has been the policies of successive governments which have continued to shrink the pool of truly contestable funding. This has made it much more difficult for the excellent research delivered by our staff and students to compete on the basis of quality and relevance.

Thus, if we are to continue to grow the scale and quality of our research endeavour, we will need to engage more actively with international private and public research users. We have already had some success in this area – our annual offshore research income is about \$33 million per annum and growing – but we must also be aware that building relationships with international agencies is very different from operating in our traditional domestic scene. Generally speaking, offshore institutions will only fund “outside their comfort zones” (their own countries or countries in which they do business) if we are able to offer them a unique research capability.

For that reason, I was very pleased to announce on 25 August the winners of International Research Team Development Awards following an open call for applications earlier in the year. These awards, which are intended to support teams in developing their capability to enhance international collaborations and attract offshore research funding, represent an investment by the University of \$1.6 million over the next three years. Covering such diverse areas of research as advanced composite materials, industrial optimisation, robotics, human nutrition, health and biodiversity, they reflect just some of the extraordinary research expertise that exists at our University. Each of the projects will receive direct funding and professional support to build their international collaborations and understand better how their relevant offshore funding agencies and clients operate. The award winning teams are to be congratulated

on their commitment to build their international profiles. I wish them well.



Capacity crowd for candidates



Left to right are Andrew Williams, Simon Prast, Len Brown and John Banks.

Four key Super City mayoral candidates John Banks, Len Brown, Andrew Williams and Simon Prast presented to a capacity crowd in the recent Towards a new Auckland debate hosted by the School of Architecture and Planning.

Tabled for discussion were questions on the retention of talented people, plans for Auckland’s waterfront and Queens Wharf, the place of rapid transport, affordable housing, heritage and culture, and management of an ethnically and economically polarised city.

Amongst the quips, jibes and political banter the debate proved an entertaining evening for the audience, which was quick to respond with applause and jeers.

Leading candidates Banks and Brown at times deferred questions on spatial development to possible future appointments: “I am exploring the concept of a city architect – charged with advising the Mayor on architecture and design,” says Banks – while Brown says: “I will have a housing adviser in the Mayoral Office.”

All candidates were unanimous on the importance of an integrated transport system, though promises were cast under the shadow of a financially constrained future and cautious public spending. Sewage, storm-water, an increased focus on tourism and a reduced focus on commercial shipping were all discussed.

Prast looked for access to the waterfront, reliability of public transport and a desire to make Auckland the Cannes of the Southern Hemisphere. His mantra was one of striking a balance between the four well-beings: social, economic, cultural and environmental.

Williams touted repeated examples of practical initiatives quietly rolled out over the Shore, considered the whole of Auckland’s coastline and harbours, not merely the CDB, and called for smarter thinking – pointing out misguided priorities such as “Auckland council spent millions on sand while sewage still spills out on the Eastern beaches.”

Brown promoted Auckland as the largest Pacific city in the world, a cosmopolitan city of fusion, and Banks held steady to a mantra of measured affordability, dialogue and ambition.

Questions from the floor included concern over the continuation of eco-city initiatives under the Super City amalgamation, tree protection rules, and the place of events in Auckland.

Jenny Dixon, Dean of the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, says: “The event was a wonderful opportunity to host and direct debate on the future of Auckland’s built environment in a public forum. It allowed the candidates some scope for good old-fashioned campaigning and was a fascinating evening.”

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Associate Professor Rod Dunbar, Director of the Maurice Wilkins Centre for Molecular Biodiscovery and Academic Co-Director of Biopharma Thematic Research Initiative (with Bill Denny), said: “Development of human therapies and diagnostics is where you need diverse input. We are privileged in this University to be in the company of so many outstanding experts in such diverse fields.”

He adds that this experience is seldom possible in research environments outside of universities. “This is a great opportunity to make good use of the university’s ‘universality’.”

Dr Diana Gash, the Biopharma TRI Programme Manager, says that based on her work experience in global pharma and biotech, the focus moves to product development rather than discovery as companies increase in size and complexity.

A further initiative already under way is Biopharma TRI’s “Pipeline Development Fund”, created to provide short-term targeted funding to enable existing projects to access expertise outside the project team.

Diana says the aim is to help accelerate the progress of early-stage research projects towards the “grant-ready” stage where they are highly likely to be supported by external research grants.

Dr Deborah Hay and colleagues were recently granted \$75,000 for their “Discovery programme for small molecule antagonists to the AM-1 receptor”. Dr Shaun Lott and his team were awarded \$60,000, which has allowed them to collaborate with medicinal chemist, Dr Swarna Gamage from ACSRC.

Outstanding effort helps others



Fifth from left is Kepa Morgan, who attended as a staff member on a recruitment tour – the SPIES Pacific Tour 2010 – organised by Marcia Murray from the Faculty of Engineering, involving visits to communities and secondary schools in Samoa, Fiji and Tonga. Twenty-six staff and students attended during the inter-semester break. The photo was taken at Puna wharf in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

The Faculty of Engineering paid a glowing tribute to Dr Te Kipa Kepa Brian Morgan as he approaches the end of his term as inaugural Associate Dean (Māori).

At a morning tea held at the Waipapa Marae on 11 August, the Dean of Engineering, Professor Michael Davies, staff and students expressed their gratitude to Kepa for his loyalty and dedication to improving the opportunities for Māori and Pacific students within the Faculty of Engineering.

Kepa first joined the faculty in 1998 as Tutor. In this role he was integral in establishing a mentoring and tutoring programme for Māori and Pacific students in the Faculty of Engineering. In 2000, he moved to the role of lecturer before being appointed as the inaugural Associate Dean (Māori) in 2002.

When he first arrived at the University, Kepa was faced with a tremendous challenge to increase the participation rates of Māori and Pacific students in engineering. He has faced this challenge with courage and passion and this has resulted in some remarkable achievements.

Dean of Engineering, Professor Michael Davies says the academic results of Māori and Pacific students in recent years has been “absolutely outstanding and is a tribute to the hard work Kepa has put in”.

The student pass rate in 2009 for Māori students in the Faculty of Engineering was 90.2 per cent compared with the University average of 83 per cent. The Pacific Island students also performed at an exceptionally high level with a pass rate of 91 percent compared with the University average of 72.2 per cent. The retention rate in 2009 for Māori and Pacific students from Part I to Part II of the Bachelor of Engineering was an exceptional and perfect 100 per cent.

The programmes developed by Kepa and his staff were acknowledged with the Inaugural Excellence in Equity Award in 2003, which recognised the outstanding effort and dedication

to enhancing prospects for Māori and Pacific students' efforts in 2003. The team was again distinguished in 2007 with another Equity Award for the contribution the SPIES Pacific Tour made for recruiting students in the Pacific. Kepa was awarded with the Australasian Association of Engineering Educators Excellence in Inclusivity Award in 2005 for his particularly impressive impact on first-year Māori enrolments.

Kepa's progress was further acknowledged in the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit academic audit report on The University of Auckland which was produced in August 2009.

The report commends “the effective impact of the Faculty of Engineering equity strategies...”

“The panel was told about the Faculty of Engineering equity strategies on access and support for Māori students and of the effective impact they were having. The panel encourages the University to examine the Faculty's approach and to encourage other parts of the University to learn from these initiatives as they might be appropriately adapted.”

Kepa was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy in 2008, becoming the first Māori to be awarded a PhD in Civil Engineering from The University of Auckland. As a result, Kepa received the Tohu Kairangi Academic Excellence Award in 2009.

SPIES (South Pacific Indigenous Engineering Students) performed a haka as a tribute to Kepa at the morning tea. Kepa has been heavily involved in the organisation which was formed in 1993. The group was set up to provide support for Māori and Pacific Island students studying engineering at The University of Auckland.

J'aime Laurenson, who became the first Pacific student to receive conjoint Law and Engineering degrees at the 2010 Autumn Graduation, credits much of his academic success to the support he received through SPIES and from Kepa. He is also the first student ever to receive honours in both degrees.

In brief...

Career and parenting

Are you thinking of combining parenting and a career at the University?

The Equity Office, in response to staff requests, has organised this informal workshop to be held from 1-3pm on Thursday 9 September in the Presentation Room (204), Level 2, ClockTower.

The office has been asked to provide information to support decision-making about having children as well as a career at the University.

The workshop will cover current research findings on fertility and work life balance. It will also include information about University support for parents, such as parental leave, breastfeeding, early childhood education and flexible work.

Professor Cindy Farquhar (Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, School of Medicine) will share her expertise as an internationally recognised practitioner and academic in women's health and infertility.

Trudie McNaughton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity) will provide a context for discussion. In addition, a number of University staff will share their relevant experiences.

To register for this workshop please contact Margaret Freeman, ms.freeman@auckland.ac.nz ext. 88316 by 6 September

Stern lectures filling fast

Registration for the Sir Douglas Robb Lectures by Lord Nicholas Stern on 8, 9 and 10 September is essential.

There were still seats left when *University News* went to press. Register at www.auckland.ac.nz/robb (inquiries to 0800 UNICONTED, 0800 864 266).

The lecture venue (Fisher & Paykel Appliances Auditorium) will open at 6pm for the 7pm lectures and attendees should bring their registration forms. Once the venue reaches capacity later arrivals will be directed to neighbouring lecture theatres linked by video.

There is evening parking for \$5 in the lower levels of the Owen G. Glenn Building.

Lord Stern's three lectures will address the topic "Managing the risks of climate change, overcoming world poverty and creating a new era of growth and prosperity: The challenges for global collaboration and rationality".

His three-day visit to the University will begin with a powhiri at the John Hood Plaza. He will give a media conference, attend two lunches (one for staff and students, the other hosted by the Trans Tasman Business Circle), and address a climate change seminar for invited guests.

No FRST funding round

FRST announced in August they will not run their main contestable rounds (covering their project and programme funding for 2010/11) this year. The foundation will extend contracts that mature on 30 September 2011 for up to one year. The Foundation will negotiate the contract extensions on a case-by-case basis and the annual funding on extended contracts will be reduced by approximately 4 percent.

Rutherford Discovery Fellowships

These support New Zealand's most talented early- to mid-career researchers. This is a new fellowship scheme which aims to attract top researchers with international research experience back to New Zealand.

Competition is anticipated to be very high for the ten fellowships awarded each year. Receipt of a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship is expected to have significant value in the future career of a researcher. The fellowship will

- provide support for ten early- to mid-career researchers each year (defined as being between three and ten years post-PhD)
- support the recipients for a five-year term
- provide competitive funding, up to \$200,000 a year
- develop excellent researchers in New Zealand.

Applicants will hear in early November if they will be on the "short list" selected for interview.

Lottery Health Research Grants

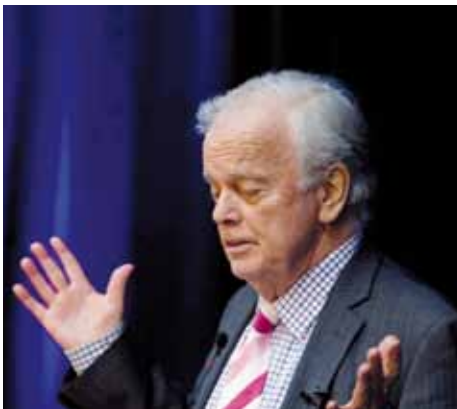
Sixty researchers and 15 PhD scholars from the University recently submitted applications totalling \$7.7 million to the Lottery Health Fund. In 2009, 34 applications were submitted totalling \$4.7 million and 14 applicants were successful recipients of funding totalling \$1.2 million. Results are to be announced from the Research Office between 4 and 24 November, after which all applicants will be advised. Inquiries should be directed to mandy.brown@auckland.ac.nz

Support for cancer research

University researchers, with external collaborators, have received a Health Research Council Programme Grant of \$4.5 million for a programme entitled "Vaccine-based immunotherapy of cancer". This will run for five years from 1 October, and will incorporate a clinical trial in melanoma patients beginning in 2012, with all components in the vaccine manufactured in New Zealand.

The programme is a collaboration between the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research in Wellington (led by Dr Ian Hermans), IRL (led by Dr Gavin Painter), Cancer Trials NZ (led by Professor Mike Findlay) and The University of Auckland (led by Associate Professor Rod Dunbar and Professor Margaret Brimble).

Hood Fellow inspires



Well-intentioned and progressive-sounding curriculum reforms designed to address crowded curriculums and disaffected students are leading to an evacuation of content from classrooms and are undermining the concept of the "knowledge society".

That's the view of Emeritus Professor of Education Michael Young of the University of London, who visited the Faculty of Education recently as a guest of the Lion Foundation and the faculty's School of Critical Studies....

For the full story, see the staff intranet (www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/uaa/for/staff/) on "News" or "More news".

Historic victory



"The best of the best" is how Microsoft New Zealand described the Team One Beep project which took out third place at the world finals of the Microsoft Imagine Cup in Poland earlier this year.

In a special event held at The University of Auckland, Scott Wylie, Director of the Developer and Platform Group for Microsoft New Zealand, said making it to third in the world was a huge achievement for Team One Beep, the University and New Zealand....

For the full story, see the staff intranet (www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/uaa/for/staff/) on "News" or "More news".

Camouflage exercise in Auckland undergrowth



Paramilitary-style masks were being constructed in a back room in Central Auckland for an operation in the urban undergrowth.

The exercise formed part of a video-art installation exploring the visual, political and psychological potency of human masking - a recurrent interest of current Elam International Artist in Residence, Jemima Wyman....

For the full story, see the staff intranet (www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/uaa/for/staff/) on "News" or "More news".

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SPPEEx (South Pacific Professional Engineering Excellence) President Randall Ah Mu says Kepa has done a lot to establish the SPIES organisation and it will be the end of an era when he leaves his position as Associate Dean (Māori).

"Kepa was a founding member of SPPEEx and was the first president so he was a real pioneer in the organisation's early days.

"Kepa is a real role model for a huge number of young Māori and Pasifika engineers so I'm sure his

vision and passion in that role will be missed," he says.

"Fortunately he is staying on at the faculty with his role as a lecturer in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department so I'm sure he will still be a great influence on those students he comes in contact with. Kepa's replacement will have big shoes to fill so I wish whoever takes the reins all the best in their new role."

Renee Girven

An interactive web 2.0 resource established to boost the language, culture and heritage of Tai Tokerau marae was launched at Hokianga on 20 August.

Te Wehi Nui.com provides text information, images, photos and filmed interviews for tamariki (children) to use at school. It also aims to increase traditional knowledge among Māori in each region, and to further encourage them to be involved in their tribal marae.

It arises out of a project co-led by Dr Merata Kawharu, Research Director of the James Henare Māori Research Centre.

The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology is funding the \$400,000 project, which is investigating the links between youth success in Tai Tokerau and tribal marae, values and language. Four pilot regions have been involved, including Te Rarawa and Ngapuhi marae in north and south Hokianga, Te Uri o Hau in north Kaipara and Patuharakeke at Takahiwi.

The website contains material on the region's histories, customary knowledge, iwi/hapu heritage, language forms, marae values, artefacts and music.

There will also be an overview of current challenges brought about by youth dislocation and poor knowledge. One focus of Te Wehi Nui will be to gauge knowledge levels among Māori youth of dialects, marae values and heritage, highlighting knowledge areas that are new to them.

Employing new generation technologies, users will be able to add their own stories and comments as well as explore the easy-to-use site.

"This resource will be unique in New Zealand," says Merata. "It will be introduced into schools and to iwi/hapu who have their own websites."

The site will have controlled access and ultimately other organisations may be able to use Te Wehi Nui, with the permission of those who participated in the project.

The NZ Police are keen to use the Māori maps component to guide their policing practices in identifying marae locations, key people and values. The cultural information on Te Wehi Nui might also be linked into justice rehabilitation and mental health programmes to support Māori youth.

The website name comes out of the traditional stories. Io (creator of all) assigned roles and tasks to all stars of the heavens and to the constellation Te Wehi Nui a Māmao was given the task of being guardian of all the stars.

This website is a repository of traditional knowledge, a place central to the cultural identity of the people that represents their hopes and aspirations.

"Te Wehi Nui might also be considered as the physical reaction experienced when Tawhirimatea (Ancestor of the climates) sends his winds to call family members back to their marae. In this sense the website acts as a calling for descendants to reconnect with their own marae," says Merata.

The launch ceremony took place at the Copthorne Hotel in Omapere, Hokianga.

Banning the Burqa

The recent decision by the French National Assembly to ban the wearing of the full-face covering burqa or niqab in public is hard to fathom from the context of a multicultural society like New Zealand.

What seems like a draconian restriction on individual freedom passed with overwhelming support from across the political spectrum: only one Assembly member voted against it.

In the lead-up debate, political and community leaders on the Right and Left, as well as prominent feminists and some Muslims endorsed the ban.

Although the bill must still be approved by the French Senate, and faces challenges under European human rights law, there is no questioning its broad popular support.

Like France's 2004 legislation preventing wearing the hijab or head-scarf in public institutions (like schools), the so-called burqa ban nowhere specifies Muslim dress or Islam – in fact it is entitled "the bill to forbid covering one's face in public". Nevertheless, several non-religious exceptions have been permitted, and it's very clear from the debate that the bill targets wearers of the burqa or niqab – gowns which cover all the face except for the eyes. These are worn by only around 1900 out of France's population of Muslims – estimated by the government at around 5 million. Reports suggest that most women who wear them are second or third generation French citizens, and that they tend to be young.

The bill's supporters argue that the burqa challenges the essentially secular character of France, by publicly asserting Muslim identity. Secularism is deeply engrained in modern French national identity – the product of a long history of struggle between the Catholic Church and the state. Laïcité – the separation between church and state in France – is strictly applied and is understood to mean not that the state must remain neutral towards religions, but rather that religious expression is prohibited in any public space associated with or supported by the state. (In fact, it is illegal to ask any questions about religious affiliation in the census in France.) That might explain the ban upon wearing the hijab in public schools.

But the more recent ban extends into all public life, and reflects deeper concerns about assimilation and French cultural values.

Countries with policies that support multiculturalism tend to recognise that maintaining minority cultural and religious traditions in public life can go hand in hand with – and even reinforce – commitment to a shared national identity and liberal democratic political values. France, however, has never recognised or supported multiculturalism – unlike, of course, immigrant societies such as the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

France has always assumed that immigrants will assimilate – and this includes not only conservatives, who tend to support assimilation in all countries, but also those on the liberal Left, for

whom identifying with cultural or religious groups has been regarded as contrary to French republicanism, and as leading to social disintegration and extremism. It's ironic that these recent bans have focused on public dress, when it might well be argued that women wearing the burqa in public are asserting their right to participate in public life, while maintaining their religious and cultural traditions, rather than opting for segregated seclusion.

French critics of the burqa also make much of the argument that it demeans women, implying that their bodies are offensive, and that they are forced to cover up by men. We might question whether the free-for-all display of women's and girls' bodies, which we have become used to in western culture, necessarily signifies freedom for women.

But in any case, the evidence is that many burqa wearers are young women whose mothers did not wear the dress, and who have chosen to wear it and to express their religious and cultural identity in public. If the French government were really concerned about women's rights, it might simply criminalise those who coerce young women, whether over religious dress or other cultural customs, rather than also arresting the women themselves.

This ban is less about liberating Muslim women or protecting French security, than it is about the limits of expressing cultural difference in France. That's why in many European countries which have also not embraced multiculturalism, support for similar burqa bans is strong. But in countries with a more open attitude to cultural diversity, there's no move to prohibit religious dress.

The issue of secularism has arisen here in New Zealand recently, over a controversial Human Rights Commission decision to remove a statement in a report that New Zealand is a secular state, and religion is a concern of the private sphere. The Catholic Church here has argued that such a definition limits the role of religion in public life. In fact, whether or not New Zealand is officially described as secular, it's very unlikely that religious groups and believers would be prevented from participating in public life.

An essential aspect of multicultural New Zealand, absent from France, is the visible presence and robust participation of a range of cultural and religious groups in our public life.

Dr Katherine Smits
Political Studies

Liggins Institute farewells a scientific hero



Sir Graham Liggins

Tribute has been paid to Sir Graham Liggins, the man for whom the Liggins Institute at The

University of Auckland was named, following his death in Auckland on 23 August.

Professor Wayne Cutfield, Director of the Institute, said the contributions to modern medicine of Sir Graham, affectionately known by many simply as "Mont", "rank amongst the most significant breakthroughs of the twentieth century.

"The staff and students of the Liggins Institute extend their sincere condolences to Mont's family and close friends. I am sure that I also speak for the many thousands of prematurely-born children (and their families) world-wide who owe their lives to the treatment that he developed. His work virtually transformed clinical neonatology."

Professor Sir Graham Liggins was pre-eminent amongst a handful of medical scientists whose pioneering work in the 1960s and 70s established Auckland's National Women's Hospital as a world-leading centre for the care of mothers and babies. Amongst his many innovations and achievements Sir Graham is best known for his discovery that giving steroids to women experiencing early labour accelerated infant lung development enough to enable premature newborn babies to breathe independently.

"His career was marked by innovation, insight and an extraordinary ability to grasp the

importance of the unexpected," added Professor Cutfield. "We hope that at an appropriate time in the future we shall have the opportunity to publicly celebrate Mont's many achievements. He remains an inspiration to the researchers at our Institute, for he was more than a brilliant scientist – he was a man of great humanity and humility.

"Above all, he was a man for whom family was of primary importance. We at the Liggins Institute extend our support and deepest sympathy to Sir Graham's family in their time of grief."

Adding his tribute the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stuart McCutcheon, said: "As a young scientist working in fetal physiology I was very aware of Mont Liggins' many achievements. He was an outstanding New Zealand scientist and we are privileged to be able to continue recognising his work through The University of Auckland Institute that is so appropriately named after him."

The Liggins Institute, set up in 2001, was The University of Auckland's first Large Scale Research Institute. It is a world leading centre for research on fetal and child health, the impact of nutrition on health throughout life, epigenetic regulation of growth and development, breast cancer, and evolutionary medicine.

Power of dance



Nicholas Rowe

opportunity to gain powerful new insights into Palestinian culture through a public lecture and video presentation by its author, Dr Nicholas Rowe – a senior lecturer in Dance Studies and Associate Dean (Postgraduate) in NICA.

Raising Dust, published by I.B. Tauris (London and New York) in a beautiful and sumptuously-illustrated edition, provides a compelling cultural history of dance in Palestine, tracing Nicholas's own journey into Palestine's past and present through historical archives, the memories of dancers and the contemporary performing arts scene.

Inspiration for this rigorously researched publication arose from his eight years working with local dance collectives and arts institutions on dance performance and education projects in cities, villages and refugee camps across the turbulent West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As an outspoken commentator for marginalised and traumatised societies, Nicholas explores dance as a tool of the establishment, used to homogenise culture and legitimise power and domination, and conversely as a tool to challenge those structures, allowing space for expression and transfer of ideas. His work portrays the history of dance in Palestine as complex and contentious, weaving dance and politics into a cultural narrative that is both personal and collective.

"What becomes evident when you read the book," said Professor Jenny Dixon, Dean of NICA, at the launch, "is the powerful positioning of dance in a highly fraught political history. Dance can be used very effectively as a political and social device to express views in ways that cannot otherwise be easily communicated without fear of retribution.

"So dance becomes a deliberate and public language or means of representing histories at various levels and documenting significant events in the lives of people. Dance becomes the people's medium for conveying particular values and views in times of conflict and oppression.

"What Nicholas has achieved in this book is the capture and documentation of diverse stories that would have likely gone untold. The book makes a significant contribution not only to our understanding of the role and importance of dance in Palestine as a means of political expression but also more broadly to the international literature on the significance of dance in society as a vitally important creative art."

The Auckland launch was the third for this book, which was also launched in London and in Ramallah on the West Bank.

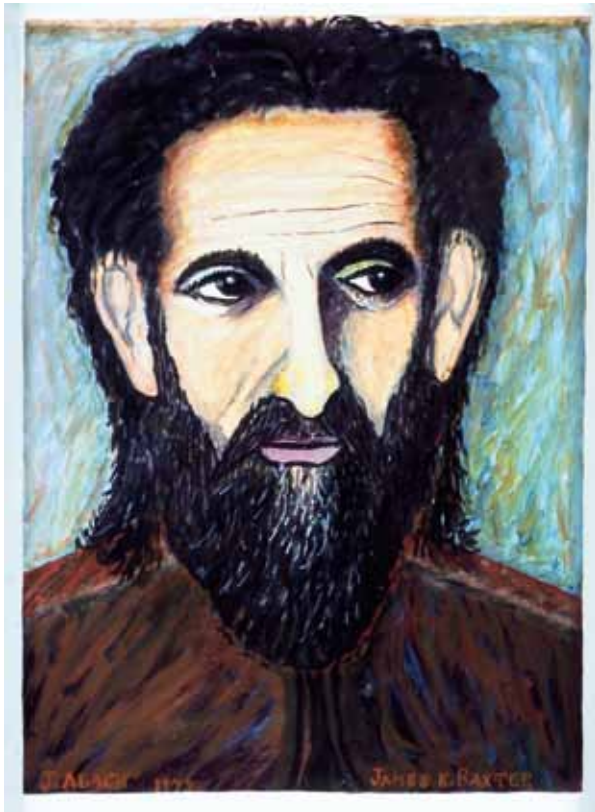
Nicholas is a graduate of the Australian Ballet School who subsequently worked as a choreographer and dancer with the Australian Ballet, the Sydney Dance Company, the Finnish National Ballet, Ballet Philippines, the West Australian Ballet, Modern Dance Turkey and Nomad Dance Theatre. He completed his PhD on Palestinian dance through the London Contemporary Dance School.

Says Ralph Buck: "Nicholas is internationally renowned for his rigorous and dynamic research and is published in the world's leading dance research journals. He serves as an exemplary role model for emerging researchers."

"Dance, its history and stories allow us to connect with and understand diverse global communities and in turn empathise with different points of view," says Associate Professor Ralph Buck, Head of Dance Studies in the University's National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries (NICA). He was speaking of an important new book, *Raising Dust: A Cultural History of Dance, Political and Social Change in Palestine*.

Those who attended the launch of *Raising Dust* at the Gus Fisher Gallery on 29 July were given an

Photo: John Turner



Amongst the more than 1000 artworks in The University of Auckland Art Collection, there are some whose origins aren't always clear, and it is often fascinating to track down who they're by and how they ended up with us.

Although every work officially purchased for the collection has been well documented by Keith Sinclair, Robert Chapman, Michael Dunn and Peter Simpson, who curated the collection for most of its first four decades from 1966, there are other works that have been bought by various departments with University funds, or received as gifts, for which we have very little or no record.

One such mystery work is a portrait of poet James K. Baxter by Joseph Alach, which was gifted to the General Library in 1975, presumably by the artist, and is now cared for as part of the Art Collection.

Alach does not appear in any significant books on New Zealand, in any of the main library databases, or the National Library's Papers Past website which makes it possible to do an online search of major New Zealand newspapers and periodicals published from 1839 to 1945.

Nor does a Google search reveal much; the online *Australasian Art Sales Digest* shows that another 1973 painting, titled *Ostend, Waiheke*, was put up for auction at Webbs, in 2005 but not sold; and the *New Zealand Electronic Text Centre* has digitised the publication *Book and Print in New Zealand: A Guide to Print Culture in Aotearoa*, which contains in the section on Croatian publishing a mention of two short-lived newspapers, *Jedinstvo (Unity)* and *Vjesnik (Messenger)*, published and edited by Joseph Alach in 1942 and 1946 respectively.

A few years ago, that seemed to be the end of the search for Alach, short of ringing all 20 Alachs in the phone book, which is hardly a priority given the minor nature of this painting. But in July on the Auckland Art Gallery's relaunched website it was noticed that the E.H. McCormick Research Library has an artist file on Alach.

In it are three newspaper clippings; a 1967 article in the *Central Suburbs Leader* on the artist's second exhibition, held at the Giotto Gallery, a *New Zealand Herald* review by T.J. McNamara of the same exhibition, and another (undated) review by McNamara of a subsequent show.

From these fragments, we can establish a sketch of who the artist was.

The *Central Suburbs Leader* article has a photo of Alach, describing him as a Sandringham resident who decided to teach himself to paint after his retirement five years earlier.

He is Yugoslavian, came to New Zealand when he was 17 and

worked in the gumfields of Northland. He briefly returned home after World War I and then dabbled in a range of jobs including hand-colouring photographs.

Although he hasn't been home for many years, most of his work depicts Yugoslavian scenes, mostly from memory but some are from magazine images or of New Zealand subjects.

McNamara notes that Alach's drawing is not very good and that the scenes painted from memory, seen "with his inward eye", are better than those that are copied.

In the later review, from the inaugural exhibition of the Spiral Gallery in Dominion Road, he is described as a prolific primitive painter but the reviewer wonders about the distinction between what is truly naive and what is just badly drawn with unsophisticated colour and composition.

Tantalised by this new information, we undertook a renewed search, including the online *Index of New Zealand Art (INZART)*, launched by the Elam Fine Arts Library in 2008 as a database of periodical articles.

In it, there are two references to Alach – McNamara's 1967 review and a 1998 *Herald* article by Pat Baskett titled "The good the bad and the folksy", about an exhibition of folk art at Lopdell House Gallery.

The latter story mostly focuses on exhibition curator and folk art collector, John Perry, but also talks to Dick Lyne, a 70-year-old who also took up painting in his retirement. It notes that two works in the exhibition, including one by Alach, were previously owned by the late Tony Fomison, who was a renowned painter and champion of "naive" artists.

Baskett's article notes that Perry contributed an index of artists to Richard Wolfe's 1997 book *All Our Own Work: New Zealand's Folk Art*, which doesn't include any work of Alach's but does have an entry in Perry's section. Perry puts Alach as living c.1896-1980 and has him also working as a land agent, in a fish shop and running a boarding house.

Two works are said to be owned by the Onehunga Library, while Lopdell House curator, Kate Wells, has in her exhibition records reference to five paintings at the Onehunga Library - an initial call to the library doesn't confirm the presence of any paintings, although it is suggested that they may now be in the community centre.

Also in the Elam Archive is a small typed catalogue from the exhibition at the Giotto Gallery, which was run on Queen Street by Franciscan monks.

In this publication, Alach says: "I think it is the nicest thing in one's life to create something beautiful. I know my pictures are not perfect in any way, but they give me pleasure to paint them, and I hope they might please someone else."

As to why the work was gifted to the General Library, that remains a mystery, as does the reason he painted a portrait of New Zealand poet James K. Baxter.

Baxter did live briefly in Grafton in the late 1960s, although it seems unlikely that the retired Alach would have been amongst the druggies that frequented his Boyle Crescent squat, and biographer John Newton has no recollection of Alach being amongst those in the Jerusalem commune Baxter established next.

In 1972 Baxter, in poor health, left Jerusalem for Auckland, where he died in a small commune, but it is probably the subsequent headlines about the passing of this renowned poet that caught Alach's attention for the portrait he painted soon after.

Elam Senior Lecturer, Sean Kerr, has also taken an interest in Alach's portrait of Baxter and "remixed" it into a multimedia installation that has the late Baxter talking to fellow poet Sam Hunt, as portrayed by Robin White.

You can see this work in Sean Kerr's survey exhibition, which opens on 3 September at the Gus Fisher Gallery and Artspace.

Andrew Clifford

Joseph Alach (c.1896-1980)
Portrait of James K. Baxter, 1973
Acrylic on board, 605 x 410mm
The University of Auckland Art Collection

What's on

FRIDAY 3 SEPTEMBER

NZSSES Forum

9am-12noon Case Room 4, Owen G. Glenn Bldg. Dr Bob Lloyd, University of Otago, School of Physics. Followed by a panel discussion, with panelists: Assoc Prof Basil Sharp, HoD of Economics, Business School, UoA; Prof Peter Malin, Director of the Institute of Earth Science and Engineering; and Associate Professor Carol Boyle, Director of the International Centre for Sustainability Research. RSVP to vicky@nzsses.org.nz

Three Minute Thesis Competition: Grand final and prizegiving
4pm Lecture Theatre 260-098, Owen G Glenn Bldg.
Watch the top eight Three Minute Thesis contestants battle for the ultimate prize in front of three celebrity judges
Visit www.auckland.ac.nz/3minutethesis

SATURDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

Portfolio workshop at Elam

10am-12noon projectspace B431, Ground floor, Main Fine Arts Bldg, 20 Whitaker Place.
To apply for admission to the BFA programme you must provide a portfolio of your work. Get help on how you prepare your portfolio and present it professionally. Ph 373 7599 ext 86623 or email s.korohina@auckland.ac.nz

Exhibition talk
Kate Montgomery, senior curator, City Gallery, Wellington discusses the temperamental interactions of Sean Kerr's recent work. 1pm Gus Fisher Gallery, 74 Shortland St. Visit www.gusfishergallery.auckland.ac.nz

WEDNESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

University Teaching and Learning

An intensive 3-day course. Day one: 8.45am-4.30pm Waipapa Marae. Mandatory for new-to-teaching academic staff, offered twice a year, this programme introduces early career academics to key concepts and strategies at the UoA. Enrol at www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/workshops or phone CAD reception on ext 88140.

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work seminar
Eileen Munro, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics: *Contemporary issues in child protection*. 4.30-6pm Room N414, N block, Faculty of Education, Gate 4, 60 Epsom Ave. RSVP to ma.barnett@auckland.ac.nz

First 2010 Sir Douglas Robb Lecture
Lord Nicholas Stern of Brentford: *Managing climate change and promoting development: Risks, scale and values*. 7pm Fisher & Paykel Appliances Auditorium, Owen G Glenn Bldg, 12 Grafton Rd.
Visit www.auckland.ac.nz/robb
Numbers are limited. You must register at www.artsfaculty.auckland.ac.nz/special/robb/

THURSDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

University Teaching and Learning

An intensive 3-day course. Day two:

9.15am-4.30pm OGH. Enrol at www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/workshops or phone CAD reception on ext 88140.

Innovation in manufacturing and materials workshop
3pm Rm 503, Bldg 404. Would you like to find out what other researchers in the University are doing in manufacturing and materials research? The workshop is intended to aid in the development of ideas and to assist you in making contact with researchers with complementary interests. Come along and share your existing research or your potential concepts at the meeting. Each researcher will have five minutes to present their research to the group, and posters can be displayed as well. Please RSVP to c.ford@auckland.ac.nz.

Department of History seminar

Prof Martin Van Gelderen, European University Institute, Florence: *Rembrandt, Grotius and the Jews: Accepting the 'Other' in the Dutch Republic*. 4pm Rm 59, History Dept. Queries to a.harris@auckland.ac.nz

Second 2010 Sir Douglas Robb Lecture
Lord Nicholas Stern of Brentford: *Policies for low-carbon growth and development: Creating a new era of progress and prosperity*. 7pm Fisher & Paykel Appliances Auditorium, Owen G Glenn Bldg, 12 Grafton Rd.
Visit www.auckland.ac.nz/robb
Numbers are limited. You must register at www.artsfaculty.auckland.ac.nz/special/robb/

FRIDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

Welfare forum

Rethinking welfare for the twenty-first century: Beyond the terms of reference. 8.30am-5.15pm OGG5, Owen G Glenn Bldg, 12 Grafton Rd.
Hosted by UoA Retirement Policy and Research Centre, Public Policy Group and Department of Sociology, and the Child Poverty Action Group. The aim of this Welfare Forum is to move beyond the narrow terms of reference of the Welfare Working Group, and make recommendations that recognise the current economic climate, and foreground the needs of children. Cost \$50/\$30. Registration essential. Email t.menezes@auckland.ac.nz

University Teaching and Learning

An intensive 3-day course. Day three: 9.15am-5pm CAD, Level 5, 76 Symonds St. Enrol at www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/workshops or phone CAD reception on ext 88140.

Third 2010 Sir Douglas Robb Lecture

Lord Nicholas Stern of Brentford: *Progress towards a global deal*. 7pm Fisher & Paykel Appliances Auditorium, Owen G Glenn Bldg, 12 Grafton Rd.
Visit www.auckland.ac.nz/robb
Numbers are limited. You must register at www.artsfaculty.auckland.ac.nz/special/robb/

SATURDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

Researching Higher Education Symposium

Day one. Engineering Building and CAD, 76 Symonds Street.
This symposium is designed to provide

a forum for thinking and talking about doing higher education research, with a special focus on researchers who are new to this field. Free to HERDSA members and open to others for the price of the annual membership fee (please note numbers are limited). For a registration form, please contact Deborah Hill at CAD on cadreception@auckland.ac.nz

Exhibition talk

Jonathan Bywater, Critic and Programme Leader in Critical Studies at Elam School of Fine Arts, responds to Sean Kerr's exhibition. 1pm Gus Fisher Gallery, 74 Shortland St. Visit www.gusfishergallery.auckland.ac.nz

SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

Researching Higher Education Symposium

Day two. Engineering Building and CAD, 76 Symonds St. For a registration form, please contact Deborah Hill at CAD on cadreception@auckland.ac.nz

MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

NZ Asia Institute/Europe Institute seminar

Prof Sung-Hoon Park, Korea University: *The Korea-EU Free Trade Agreement and possible implications for NZ*. 12noon-1pm Rm 325, Level 3, Owen G Glenn Bldg, 12 Grafton Rd. Visit www.nzai.auckland.ac.nz or www.europe.auckland.ac.nz

Monday Night Jazz Series: Alan Brown Trio

8pm Studio One, Kenneth Myers Centre, 74 Shortland St. Cost \$15/\$10. Featuring Alan Brown (Hammond organ), Dixon Nacey (guitars) and Josh Sorenson (drums).

TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

Dissolving sugar

Exhibition by Elam MFA students Carolin Casey, Matt Heays, Vicki Ormond, Mathew Teirney and Sarah Williams. 11am-4pm George Fraser Gallery, 25 Princes St. Until 18 September.

Department of Psychology seminar

Assoc Prof Lynne Hillier, Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, La Trobe University, Australia: *The creation of self as a work of art: Truth games, care of the self and same sex attracted youth*. 1pm HSB 604. Queries to v.braun@auckland.ac.nz

School of Asian Studies seminar

Prof Kyeong-ju Park, College of Humanities, Wonkwang University, Research Fellow School of Asian Studies, and Dr Changzoo Song, UoA: *The identity questions of Korean Chinese in their relationship with South Koreans and Han Chinese: Viewed from post-1990s novels*. 4pm Patrick Hanan Rm 501, Arts 2.

Bioengineering research seminar

Harvey Ho, Auckland Bioengineering Institute: *Computational modelling of the cerebral circulation and aneurysms*. 4-5pm Level 5 Seminar Rm, UniServices House, 70 Symonds St.

WEDNESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

Computer Science seminar

Bob Doran, retired CS Professor and ex-HoD, UoA: *What I did on my holidays*. 12-1pm CS Seminar Rm 270, Bldg 303S. This is an illustrated talk about aspects of computer history including:

- Visits to the Computer History Museum and 'Digibarn' in California
- NZ-made computers
- Recent discoveries about totalisator machines in the early 20th century.

Master of Public Policy seminar

NZ's untapped potential: The innovation agenda. 12.30-2pm Women's Federation Rm, OGH.
Featuring Dr Rick Boven, Director, NZ Institute and Prof Cris Shore, Dept of Anthropology, UoA.

THURSDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

School of Environment seminar

Dr Marc-Andre Brideau: *Landslide at the north end of town: What is the hazard to Dawson City, Canada?* 1-2pm HSB 429.
Queries to m.dickson@auckland.ac.nz
Visit www.env.auckland.ac.nz/seminars/2010/Brideau_160910.pdf

Classifieds

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

A one-bdrm apartment is available in The Aucklander, Rutland St, City, just behind the Public Library. Fully furnished, immaculate, everything included. North-facing, sunny and warm. No smokers. \$300 pw. Contact Bryan on 480 5857.

House-sitter wanted: Responsible, mature professional couple or individual required to house-sit Ponsonby, Auckland villa from 24 December 2010 to 15 January 2011. Very handy to shops and cafes. No kids, no pets, no smokers. In return for security and garden watering only cost will be \$100 contribution towards power. Reference required. Phone (09) 378 8883 or (021) 637-887. Email suereidy@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

Early childhood vacancies for under two-year-old children.

The University Infant and Toddler centres have vacancies. Centre hours are 7.45am-5.15pm. Very competitive rates. High adult to child ratio. City Campus, Alten Road Early Childhood Centre, 3 Alten Rd - phone Teresa on 923 5121 or email ecc-altenrd@auckland.ac.nz
Grafton Campus, Park Avenue Infant and Toddler centre, 28 Park Ave - phone Jenni on 923 7755 or email ecc-parkaveinfants@auckland.ac.nz

Lost on campus: gold necklace and a gold ring (threaded together) on Tuesday 17 August. Great sentimental value. Please contact Tamra George on (021) 900-922 or 306-6569.

Travel. I have 12 years experience in booking all aspects of personal travel for university staff and lecturers. I pride myself in ensuring that your travel plans are sourced at the lowest possible costs and are tailor-made to your requirements. Contact Karen on Karen.embleton@mondotravel.co.nz or 940 0064 (wk) or (021) 188 7781.

For a full list of The University of Auckland events see: www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/home/events

Please email classified ads to m.playfair@auckland.ac.nz nine days before publication. Cost \$20 (incl GST).