New Zealand’s largest roading project will include the vision of three alumni from the University’s School of Architecture and Planning.

The controversial Waterview connection, which will complete Auckland’s western ring route, has been under review by the Environmental Protection Authority’s board of inquiry. At least six key changes were made to the original plans presented by the New Zealand Transport Agency in a final decision recently released from the board.

Included in the changes – a pedestrian bridge near Alford St to link Unitec with Waterview. The design was the brainchild of Dan Lowery, Matt Le Grice and Kenneth Li, all of whom now work at leading architecture firm Jasmax. As M(Arch) Prof students in 2010, they participated in a competition aimed at generating ideas to help reduce the impact of the 4.5-kilometre link.

Under the guidance of Senior Lecturer in Architecture Bill McKay, the postgraduates designed an x-shaped foot and cycle bridge to carry pedestrians across Oakley Creek from Great North Road to Unitec campus. Their goal was to conceive a strategy to minimise the adverse effects of the new SH20 scheme, and to deliver a positive return to the Waterview community. In a collective statement, the group explained their vision:

“The design of the bridge aims to break the barriers of various modes of parallel movement. The bridge allows perpendicular movement by penetrating through these parallel propagations. Nodes are set up at intersections of movement and promote diverse spaces for outdoor activities to occur. The bridge forks at a mid-point over Oakley Creek, allowing multiple connections across the bridge as well as providing a ‘sandwich eating’ spot on a sunny afternoon.”

Bill said he is proud of the students, whose inclusion in the final plan is a “tremendous achievement”.

“In the past, people have focused on trying to stop developments they don’t like. Here, we looked at offering more constructive solutions. We knew there was no way to stop the motorway, so we focused on how to improve the design,” says Bill, adding that the board of inquiry praised the “highly constructive atmosphere” of the review.

From left: Dan Lowery, Bill McKay, Matt Le Grice, Kenneth Li
Leading the Way
The recent announcement of a $4 million gift to the University by Engineering alumnus Kim Goldwater and his wife Jeanette in association with the establishment of their Waiheke Island winery as the new centre for our Wine Science programme highlights once again the tremendous power of philanthropy.

The history of philanthropy is as long and distinguished as the history of our University. In 1884, just one year after the University was founded, Thomas B Gillies, Justice of the Supreme Court, endowed a Science Scholarship that has now been awarded for 126 years. The recipient in 1970 would eventually become Sir Vaughan Jones, New Zealand’s most eminent mathematician and 1990 winner of the Fields Medal, mathematics’ equivalent of the Nobel Prize. However, for much of that period, our approach to generating philanthropic support for the University has been somewhat haphazard.

The infrastructure we have more recently put in place through the External Relations and Development Office and the faculties has undoubtedly given many donors the confidence to invest in the University, knowing that their gifts will be stewarded wisely and devoted only to the purposes which they have specified. This confidence, and our active engagement with a wide range of donors, has led to outstanding success in our Leading the Way philanthropic campaign. As a result, our original campaign target of $100 million to be raised over the life of the current Strategic Plan (2006-2012) has been well and truly surpassed.

The current total of $158 million comprises about $120 million in “current use” funds (those that will be used for a specific project over the next few years) and the balance in endowment funds (for which the capital value will be maintained and interest income used). The endowment funds will be expected to generate an average $2 million each year in perpetuity. With its focus on excellent people, the Campaign is helping us to support outstanding students and staff through scholarships, fellowships, research positions and even eight funded chairs. Given that the quality of a university is ultimately determined by the quality of its people, this support by a wide range of donors will be critical to our future as a leading international university.

Transforming Auckland

What steps can we take to make Auckland a more sustainable city? This is the challenge for University of Auckland researchers posed by the Thematic Research Initiative (TRI) which aims to increase cross-faculty collaboration and inter-disciplinary research on the theme: “Transforming Auckland: institutional, technological and cultural innovations for sustainable cities”.

This year’s funding round has resulted in five new projects that will tackle topics ranging from water, solar power energy, housing, transport, and green infrastructure. They were launched at a special celebration on 1 July attended by the TRI Champion (Dean of the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, Professor Jenny Dixon), Auckland Council Research Unit managers (Grant Barnes and Eva McLaren) and members of the TRI Steering Committee. The five research teams involve 27 researchers from six faculties at the University, including new research partnerships with Massey University and an external consultant.

Not surprisingly, the TRI research is of great interest to the Auckland Council, which this year contributed financial and personnel support. In a welcoming speech, Professor Errol Haarhoff, Chair of the Steering Committee, acknowledged the Council’s support and suggested the interdisciplinary focus of the TRI research will enable a broader, more integrated approach to the task of improving Auckland’s sustainability.

The five projects funded are: “A critical evaluation of housing intensification strategies”, which will use Auckland case studies to examine potential market and consumer resistance. An innovative arts-science collaboration between researchers in NICAI, Science and Education to investigate “Water in the sustainable city” aims to devise a series of urban installation and performance works “that will bring to light the material, technical, social, cultural, spiritual and economic dimensions of water in Auckland City”. Auckland’s “Solar renewable energy potential” brings together researchers from NICAI, Engineering and Business to look at the potential for photovoltaic energy from Auckland’s built environment. Other research underway is looking at “Transforming Auckland’s transportation system”, which will develop a tool allowing people and policymakers to assess the impacts of their transport mode choice. The “Greening of Auckland” looks at the potential benefits of “green infrastructure” aimed at managing stormwater and reducing energy use and carbon emissions.

www.transforming.auckland.ac.nz

Graduate survey

The Graduate Longitudinal Study New Zealand (GLSNZ) — a large-scale survey designed to determine the ongoing impact of a university education on New Zealand graduates’ lives — is being launched at The University of Auckland this coming week.

Some 3894 of our students are being approached to take part. Commissioned by Universities New Zealand-Te Pōkai Tara and with funding from the Government, the study involves surveying 14,300 final-year students across eight New Zealand universities about their lifestyles, employment, projected career development, and their health and well-being. Auckland is one of the first universities to launch the study, with other universities following in coming weeks.

The survey targets final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students and those who participate in this initial survey will be approached again for follow-up surveys in two, five and ten years’ time.

While similar studies have been undertaken overseas, the Graduate Longitudinal Survey New Zealand will be the most comprehensive.

Results of the initial baseline survey will be released in February next year.
Knights in heavy armour

Suits of armour might have made medieval soldiers feel safe, but modern scientists have found they were so heavy and constricting they were likely to have limited performance and even influenced the outcome of battles.

The research, by scientists at The University of Auckland, University of Leeds, and University of Milan, has been published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Biological Sciences.

“Carrying a load of 30kg spread around the body requires more energy than carrying the same load in a backpack,” explains Dr Graham Askew from Leeds University. “This is because, in a suit of armour, the limbs are loaded with weight, which means it takes more effort to swing them with each stride. If you’re wearing a backpack, the weight is all in one place and swinging the limbs is easier.”

“In nature the fastest-running animals, such as cheetahs or ostriches, have relatively light and thin limbs,” says Dr Formenti. “Weighing down the limbs is clearly unhelpful in situations where quick movement is required.”

As if that wasn’t enough, suits of armour also appear to have constricted breathing. Armour limits the amount of air that can be taken in at each breath and increases the amount of energy required to breathe.

“Being wrapped up in a tight shell of thick steel makes one feel invincible but also unable to take a deep breath,” says Dr Formenti. “You feel breathless as soon as you move around in medieval armour, and this would most likely limit a soldier’s ability to fight.”

The research was undertaken with a team of highly skilled volunteers accustomed to wearing armour for shows at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds. The amount of energy that the volunteers expended, while walking or running in exact replicas of four types of European armour, was calculated by measuring the amount of oxygen they used.

The results have implications for understanding the outcomes of historic battles. For instance the findings lend weight to the idea that exhaustion contributed to the defeat of heavily-armoured French soldiers against their lighter English enemy on the muddy battlefield at Agincourt (1415) and following the long march to the Battle of Crécy (1346).

Photo: A volunteer in replica armour has his oxygen use measured while walking on a treadmill. Photograph by Dr Graham Askew, University of Leeds.

Architect’s lecture
Ian Athfield features in the Fast Forward series. Established in 1968, Athfield Architects began producing experimental and often provocative residential projects, including landmark projects in the history of New Zealand housing such as the Buck and Custance Houses. In the 1980s the practice took on a wider variety of community and commercial buildings, and in the last two decades had produced significant and often audacious public projects, such as Wellington’s Public Library and Civic Square, Jade Stadium in Christchurch, and the Palmerston North Public Library. In 1997 The University of Auckland named Ian Athfield a Distinguished Alumnus, and in 1996 he was made Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit. Engineering Lecture Theatre 439, 20 Symonds Street, 3 August, 6.30pm-7.30pm www.creative.auckland.ac.nz/fastforward

Buildings 403 and 404
This is your chance to showcase your work and potentially have it incorporated in the rebuild of Engineering’s buildings 403 and 404. As part of the Infrastructure and Environment research theme, we are holding a workshop for staff to present their ideas on how the new buildings might function.

Come along and share your views on how the new buildings might operate or look, and how your research could be demonstrated as an integral part of the new buildings. Each speaker will have a five-minute opportunity to showcase their research. Property Services, the design team and Jasmax Architects will be attending this workshop.
Date: Tuesday 2 August, 9.30am to 12 noon, Venue: Building 401, room 511
RSVP to Chris Ford c.ford@auckland.ac.nz

Call for contributions
Contributions to present at CAD’s 11th Annual Teaching and Learning Showcase are now being received.

The showcase aims to celebrate the achievements of some of the University’s outstanding teachers. This year’s showcase will take on the theme of Active Learning, and will take place at the Engineering Building on Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 October. If you would like to present at this event, see the proposal guidelines (found on the right-hand side of CAD’s home page in the news and event section) at www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/index.php?p=news_detail&item=263. Proposals are due by Monday 22 August. An invitation to attend the Teaching and Learning Showcase and registration will be issued once programme details are finalised. Contact Dr Barbara Kensington-Miller at b.kensington-miller@auckland.ac.nz
"Social justice gets me to work in the mornings. It's about our most vulnerable student groups – Māori, Pasifika and low income students – not doing as well as they should be at school," says Professor Liz McKinley.

Liz, the director of the Starpath Project, is the Faculty of Education’s newest professor.

The former secondary school teacher is a role model in more ways than one. She was the first in her family to go to university, she was in charge of a secondary school science department when it was a rarity for a woman, let alone a Māori woman, and she now spearheads a research unit which is making a difference for Māori and Pacific Island students and students from low income families.

Liz, of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa and Ngāi Tahu descent, grew up in the Wairarapa. She went to Kuranui College before earning an undergraduate science degree at the University of Otago and she completed both a masters and PhD at the University of Waikato while teaching full-time.

"My parents set the bar quite high in terms of education. They always had aspirations for us regarding secondary education. Your weren’t allowed to leave until you got your UE."

Liz’s career spans thirty years. During that time she has specialised in teaching bilingual science classes (Māori and English), and held lecturing and management posts at the University of Waikato, including the Assistant Dean Māori Education. Before joining Starpath in 2007, Liz was Associate Professor Māori Education at The University of Auckland’s Faculty of Education.

Starpath is a pioneering research project which aims to increase the number of Māori, Pacific and students from low-income backgrounds succeeding at secondary school and entering tertiary study. Late last year it was announced the project would be funded for a further five years.

"The fact that we have got phase two suggests that we have been successful in showing we could make a difference in phase one," says Liz.

"We have seen changes with some of the work we have done. We have certainly made government agencies a lot more aware of what is happening around the NCEA choice work, around what is happening in schools, how students choose subjects and how parents should be involved in decisions," she says.

The issue Starpath is fighting hard to change is huge: New Zealand has the second highest rate of educational inequality in the OECD, with Māori, Pacific and students from low-income backgrounds showing the highest rates of educational under-achievement.

Liz admits the issue goes far beyond education but she believes the project can make a difference for those missing out on a tertiary education.

“One of the things we have been working on is getting schools to organise and centralise their data, not gathering extra data because they already gather a lot of data but organising their data better so it becomes knowledge that can be used to make informed decisions."

She says if you start to monitor student progress during the year using this data you can start to see if students are falling off track and intervene before it is too late.

In phase one Starpath worked with three Auckland and two Northland secondary schools to identify the barriers to student success and then successfully tested ways of breaking down those barriers. In Phase two Starpath is being expanded to include 35 more secondary schools in the North Island.

Earlier this month, Liz temporarily handed over Starpath’s reins to Professor Stuart McNaughton while she takes a 12-month sabbatical.

The sabbatical, she says, will give her an opportunity to focus on writing academic papers. On the list is an article on how equity goals can be met in schools using the data they already collect.

“Equity is about access, participation and achievement,” says Liz. Through their data schools can measure whether their students are being given the opportunity and necessary support to learn what they need to reach their full potential.

Tickets are on sale now for the Mid-Winter Charity Ball in aid of Kidz First Children’s Hospital and the Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand. Kidz First Children’s Hospital provides family-centred holistic care for children and their families in the Counties Manukau area.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation provides outstanding education and support to people with prostate cancer and prostate cancer survivors. “This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy great food, wine, and entertainment, whilst raising money for two worthy charities,” says organisers Dr Anna King and Marie Cameron from the University’s School of Nursing.

The two women decided to organise the ball and then chose the charities.

They are inviting University staff, Auckland DHB and Counties Manukau DHB staff and anyone else interested.

The ball is at The Langham Hotel on 27 August from 7pm.

Contact Marie marie.cameron@auckland.ac.nz; ext 81642 or Anna a.king@auckland.ac.nz; ext 81537 to get your tickets.
Pharmacology Mike Dragunow has been funded Māori wellbeing. particular aspects contribute to improving to achieve these outcomes, and explores how school of population health, which will map senior lecturer at Te Kupenga hauora Māori, hrC round is one led by Dr Rhys Jones, a Among the 20 projects funded in the latest projects ($930,931), the Ruth Spencer Medical people to present their research overseas. The awards include funding for 20 programmes, projects, First grants and feasibility studies. Congratulations go to the following investigators and their teams: Professor Peter Stone, Mr Mattias Soop, Stephen Jamieson, Professor Rodney Jackson, Professor Ed Mitchell, Associate Professor Bob Anderson, Professor Michael Dragunow, Professor Laura Bennet, Professor John Windsor, Professor Bill Wilson, Professor Shanthi Ameratunga, Dr Rhys Jones, Professor Shanthi Ameratunga from Epidemiology and Biostatistics will lead a project to identify and reduce hazardous drinking among high-risk patients. Following a brief alcohol misuse screen administered to over 6,000 injured patients, researchers will conduct a randomised controlled trial to investigate the effectiveness of an innovative mobile phone intervention. This will involve real-time motivational messages delivered periodically over four weeks using state-of-the-art technology and health psychology, social learning and communication theory.

Among the 20 projects funded in the latest HRC round is one led by Dr Rhys Jones, a senior lecturer at Te Kupenga Hauora Māori, School of Population Health, which will map the effects of marae food gardens on Māori wellbeing, based on experiences of marae communities in urban Tāmaki Makaurau.

The project aims to identify the most important wellbeing outcomes for participants, assess how well marae food gardens are helping to achieve these outcomes, and explores how particular aspects contribute to improving Māori wellbeing.

Another project led by Professor of Pharmacology Mike Dragunow has been funded to the tune of $4.5 million dollars (a project led by Professor Bill Wilson in the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre received $5,252,166) to study the biological mechanisms and treatments underlying human neurodegenerative diseases. The research will utilise human brain tissue and cells while other models will focus on determining how neuropathology relates to symptomatology. The goal is to translate lab-based research into therapies for patients suffering from neurodegenerative diseases in the community.

Professor Shanthi Ameratunga from the University of Auckland received $5,252,166 to study the biological mechanisms and treatments underlying human neurodegenerative diseases. The research will utilise human brain tissue and cells while other models will focus on determining how neuropathology relates to symptomatology. The goal is to translate lab-based research into therapies for patients suffering from neurodegenerative diseases in the community.

Professor Shanthi Ameratunga from Epidemiology and Biostatistics will lead a project to identify and reduce hazardous drinking among high-risk patients. Following a brief alcohol misuse screen administered to over 6,000 injured patients, researchers will conduct a randomised controlled trial to investigate the effectiveness of an innovative mobile phone intervention. This will involve real-time motivational messages delivered periodically over four weeks using state-of-the-art technology and health psychology, social learning and communication theory.

The Press has also started The Signalman’s House Series, a reference to the fact that the Michael King Writers’ Centre is located in the former signalman’s house on Mount Victoria in Devonport.

The Press has also started The Signalman’s House Series, a reference to the fact that the Michael King Writers’ Centre is located in the former signalman’s house on Mount Victoria in Devonport. “Each year it is home to the Creative New Zealand/University of Auckland/Michael King Centre literary fellow and the plan is to publish a book each year written by the resident fellow,” says Peter.

In 2010 the position was held by Bill Direen, a New Zealand writer and musician normally resident in Paris. “His book is called Devonport: A Diary and consists as the title suggests of a diary written during Bill’s residency in Devonport. As a returning South Islander who had never lived this far north before, Bill records in his diary the familiar/strange impressions of the Auckland and especially Devonport environment. The book was published in an edition of 100 and was designed and printed by Tara McLeod who also provided a small neat drawing of the signalman’s house for the cover which will become the logo for the whole series.”

Holloway Press has been busy this year with two new books published.

The first, Two Walk in Edinburgh, is a collaboration between Wellington poet Gregory O’Brien and Hungarian photographer Mari Mahr. Mari was married to New Zealand graphic designer Graham Percy and an exhibition at the Gus Fisher Gallery devoted to both Graham and Mari’s work included the photographs contained in Two Walk in Edinburgh. Each of eight photographs – a kind of memorial to the photographer’s husband who had recently died – is accompanied by one of Gregory’s poems. The photographs are not reproductions but original digital prints. “The book, an edition of 90 signed and numbered copies, was designed and printed by Brendan O’Brien, Gregory’s brother, and has an afterword by Jenny Bornholdt who is married to Gregory, so it is a kind of family affair,” says Press director, Associate Professor of English Peter Simpson.

The second book, A Diary, is a record of Bill’s residency in Devonport. As a returning South Islander who had never lived this far north before, Bill records in his diary the familiar/strange impressions of the Auckland and especially Devonport environment. The book was published in an edition of 100 and was designed and printed by Tara McLeod who also provided a small neat drawing of the signalman’s house for the cover which will become the logo for the whole series.”

The book, an edition of 90 signed and numbered copies, was designed and printed by Brendan O’Brien, Gregory’s brother, and has an afterword by Jenny Bornholdt who is married to Gregory, so it is a kind of family affair,” says Press director, Associate Professor of English Peter Simpson.

The Press has also started The Signalman’s House Series, a reference to the fact that the Michael King Writers’ Centre is located in the former signalman’s house on Mount Victoria in Devonport. “Each year it is home to the Creative New Zealand/University of Auckland/Michael King Centre literary fellow and the plan is to publish a book each year written by the resident fellow,” says Peter.

In 2010 the position was held by Bill Direen, a New Zealand writer and musician normally resident in Paris. “His book is called Devonport: A Diary and consists as the title suggests of a diary written during Bill’s residency in Devonport. As a returning South Islander who had never lived this far north before, Bill records in his diary the familiar/strange impressions of the Auckland and especially Devonport environment. The book was published in an edition of 100 and was designed and printed by Tara McLeod who also provided a small neat drawing of the signalman’s house for the cover which will become the logo for the whole series.”

www.hollowaypress.auckland.ac.nz

HRC Results announced

University of Auckland researchers will receive $27.6 million in HRC funding in 20 awards announced in July. The awards include funding for 20 programmes, projects, First grants and feasibility studies. Congratulations go to the following investigators and their teams: Professor Peter Stone, Mr Mattias Soop, Stephen Jamieson, Professor Rodney Jackson, Professor Ed Mitchell, Associate Professor Bob Anderson, Professor Michael Dragunow, Professor Laura Bennet, Professor John Windsor, Professor Bill Wilson, Professor Shanthi Ameratunga, Dr Rhys Jones, Professor Shanthi Ameratunga, Dr Cath Stinear. See story adjacent.

Animal research award

The Australasian Society for Research in Animals and Teaching (ANZCCART) held its annual conference in Rotorua in June. During the conference Linley Nisbet, of the Auckland Bioengineering Institute, was presented with the ANZCCART 2011 Career Award. This award was in recognition of Linley’s long, distinguished career as an animal technician, and her contribution to animal research in general and to the University in particular.

AMRF results

The Auckland Medical Research Foundation (AMRF) announced $1,132,631 in funding to medical researchers in Auckland in its June 2011 grant round. The grants included 10 successful research projects ($930,931), the Ruth Spencer Medical Research Fellowship ($178,000) to Dr Primal Singh from the University’s Department of Surgery, and ten travel grants ($23,700) for researchers to present their research overseas.

About the new Ministry of Science and Innovation

Do you want to know what the new Ministry of Science and Innovation will look like? How it will impact on the public research funding environment? Then don’t miss this unique opportunity to hear from Murray Bain, inaugural chief executive of the Ministry of Science and Innovation, and by New Zealand’s research landscape: public and private research funds. Venue: Decima Glenn Room (260-310) Level 3, Owen G Glenn Building, Wednesday 24 August 12-1 pm

This session is part of the Research Essentials seminar series. At this series, knowledgeable speakers reflect on their experiences and offer you new perspectives on how best to advance your research. For queries, please contact Mariana Suarez (m.suarez@auckland.ac.nz or ext. 81764).

Research news

The University of Auckland News
Ngā Mōteatea: An Introduction / He Kupu Arataki written by Jane McRae, an honorary research fellow in the Department of Māori Studies and translated into Māori by Hēni Jacob (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou) has been published by Auckland University Press in time to celebrate Māori Language Week 2011, Te wiki o te Reo Māori.

The songs of Māori tradition are a living art form and an abundant source of knowledge about tribal history and culture. From the 1920s, Sir Āpirana Ngata began collecting and annotating these songs – a massive undertaking that, with the help of translators Pei Te Hurinui Jones and later Hirini Moko Mead, became the treasured four-volume Ngā Mōteatea.

Auckland’s landscape and the recurrence of significant volcanic cones acknowledge this history.

Not surprisingly, Siddell was born in Auckland (Grey Lynn) and schooled at Mount Albert Grammar, where he was good at art but finished school when he was 16 and spent ten years as a tradesman. He also became a keen tramper and mountaineer, which might explain the mountain views and panoramic views that are often a feature of his paintings, even if only glimpsed through a window. As he recalls in his book, it was through the Auckland Tramping Club that he met his future wife, Sylvia, after rescuing her in the Coromandel Ranges.

In the 1960s he attended a short course at Auckland Teachers College and also began painting again, influenced by W.A. Sutton’s iconic depictions of Canterbury. Sylvia also painted and introduced him to the work of Rita Angus, Colin McCahon, Toss Woollaston and Dan Binney. A long and distinguished career followed and he was awarded the Queen’s Service Order (QSO) for services to art in 1990, and then made a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (DCNZM) in 2008 (Sylvia became an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2002).

An exhibition of Sir Peter Siddell’s paintings is currently on show at Lopdell House in Titirangi until 21 August.

Peter Siddell (b.1935)
Northern Shore, 1995
Alkyd on canvas, 800 x 1200mm
The University of Auckland Art Collection

Andrew Clifford
Curator - Acting Director Centre for New Zealand Art Research and Discovery
Annie Goldson “tells personal stories to tell bigger stories.”

This is an understatement. The stories Annie tells are huge, gritty, global. They expose the very depths of humanity.

Her latest documentary Brother Number One follows the story of happy carefree Kiwi yachtie Kerry Hamill, who in 1979 while living an idyllic dream sailing off the Gulf of Thailand strayed into Cambodian waters. He sailed into the arms of the Khmer Rouge; sailed into Hell.

Kerry was the eldest son (brother number one) of the Hamill family from Whakatane Heads. “Brother Number One is his story,” she says, “but it is also the story of two million others.”

“In the 1970s, in the wake of the Vietnam War and deeply entrenched in Cold War politics, the nations of the world turned their eyes away from Cambodia. They knew what would happen.”

Over the next four years under the power of fanatical Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, who had assumed the self-appointed title of “Brother Number One”, the country began “restarting civilisation”. While the world stood back Pol Pot’s ill-fated utopia resulted in the genocide of two million people through slavery, starvation, torture and execution.

“Apart from the film The Killing Fields people are ignorant of this atrocity, ignorant of history which saw the greatest war criminals since the Third Reich aided and abetted by China, the US and the Western powers. Younger people don’t even know who Pol Pot is.”

Brother Number One interweaves the enormity of that atrocity with the personal emotional journey of Kerry’s younger brother, Rob Hamill, New Zealand Olympic and trans-Atlantic champion rower.

When the tragedy of Kerry’s death was uncovered 16 months after he went missing it was greeted with a repressive stoicism typical of Pakeha provincial New Zealand. Rob’s is a journey to honour his brother’s memory by finding and telling his story, to discover the truth surrounding the capture, incarceration and murder; perhaps also to forgive and find peace.

“I see in Rob an almost Shakespearean dilemma, caught between a desire to forgive but being consumed with a righteous hatred: how he has to struggle with that on a daily basis and how it impacted just one family. When you extrapolate that to two million people dead you try to imagine what happens to a whole culture,” says Annie.

As I sit in Annie’s dimly-lit office and speak with this world-acclaimed director, still wearing her large impenetrable sunglasses, she explains the film is “observational”, “capturing reality as it happens”. It documents the closed world Kerry found himself in through a richness of bleak archival footage and eye-witness testimonies pieced together in a forensic exactness.

“The film raises issues about accountability, culpability and justice; about regional issues. It raises questions about artifice and legitimacy, about what it means to forgive. It actually questions the complicity of the whole world in what happened in Cambodia.

“After the Vietnam War there was no way that the world was going to step in. There are a lot of reasons why Cambodians could be very cynical and why to some degree these disasters are not just national issues,” says Annie. “In its broadest sense the film is an attempt to try to stop genocide occurring again.”

In her cool, measured story-telling and with the immediacy of raw emotion, Annie Goldson is set to reacquaint the world with its own history. And now, just over three decades after Pol Pot, Brother Number One will turn, fix and hold eyes and ears across the globe to scenes of Cambodia. This time no one will look away.

Megan Fowlie