THE POWER OF WATER
Rights and interests in the Waikato River

MODERN ALCHEMIST
WHO ARE WE ANYWAY?
ENHANCING OUR RELATIONSHIPS

The University of Auckland is embedded in highly volatile global economic, political, and demographic changes that are making great demands on us and reshaping the way we engage.

This “new world” was on show for me at recent conferences I attended in Japan and Hong Kong. At the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRUI) meeting and at an International Education Conference attended by 1300 delegates two strong themes emerged: first, the strategic approaches deployed by leading universities worldwide to strengthen their global position; second, I observed an increasing awareness that our university futures lie in close and active partnership with each other.

At The University of Auckland we are well positioned for this with membership of APRU, a consortium of 42 leading research universities in the Pacific Rim; Universitas 21, which networks leading research universities in 15 countries; and the Worldwide Universities Network, focused primarily on research collaboration.

Auckland’s creation of a third Deputy Vice-Chancellor position gives focused recognition to the need for the University to sharpen its work with strategic partners. As Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Engagement) I lead and support our efforts with external partners, be that internationally or at home with business, local government, central government and our communities of alumni and other supporters.

All these relationships are increasingly important as we seek to deliver on our mission to be a research-led international university, recognised for excellence in teaching and research, the advancement of knowledge, and commitment to our local, national and international communities.

Our mission is not self-serving. As New Zealand’s largest university and leading research university The University of Auckland holds a weighty responsibility at the vanguard of the country’s economic growth targets. There is already recognition that a high-ranked university is critical to that equation. Business NZ CEO Phil O’Reilly openly says: “If The University of Auckland fails, New Zealand fails.” The University of Auckland is committed to NZ Inc and the role it must play in the country’s future.

To be recognised internationally The University of Auckland is driving every aspect of its organisation to be the best, be it teaching, learning, campus experience, research, commercialisation or business, community and alumni relationships.

What I am working to achieve is best-practice with our external relationships. The very size and scale of the University means that many of us have relationships with the same external organisations and at a variety of levels. I am looking to streamline and enhance these relationships so they develop into strong and rewarding partnerships.

Within the University we need to work together by sharing a strategic approach, playing to our existing strong relationships and strengthening the gaps. My role is to provide the glue to consolidate an effective platform for the University to successfully reach out to partners domestically and offshore.

Meeting the University’s goals and ensuring we are best positioned to deal with the scale of the challenges that lie ahead requires an improvement in the way we collectively manage our relationships internally. We need to align our efforts by sharing information and working together. This is our challenge.

But through this, relationships will be strengthened. We will understand our partners better, engage with them more frequently and understand their needs. Our partners will gain a better understanding of us and what we represent. Ultimately we will deliver the strong strategic partnerships which, as with excellence in teaching, learning and research, will characterise a successful University of Auckland in the decades ahead.

JENNY DIXON
Ingenio short story competition

For alumni, current students and staff of The University of Auckland

Here’s your chance to put your creative writing skills to the test, regardless of how much or how little experience you have.

1st prize:
- A personalised two-hour coaching session with New Zealand author and Distinguished Alumnus Emeritus Professor C K Stead
- $250 book voucher from the University Bookshop
- $150 book voucher from Auckland University Press

Judges:
Dr Selina Tusitala Marsh, Distinguished Professor Brian Boyd and Charlotte Grimshaw

Please read the terms and conditions. Either send your manuscript with the completed form to alumni@auckland.ac.nz or post your manuscript and completed form to: Ingenio Short Story Competition, Alumni Relations and Development, Private Bag 92019, Victoria St West, Auckland 1142

Maximum number of words: 1500 Closing date: 15 July 2013

Ingenio Short Story Competition entry form:
Name __________________________ Address __________________________
Phone __________________________ Mobile __________________________ Email __________________________

Title of short story __________________________ Relationship: Graduate/staff/current student __________________________
Staff position held __________________________ Qualifications held __________________________

☐ I agree to the competition terms and conditions set out on the Ingenio website www.ingenio-magazine.com/terms

Dame Anne Salmond, Distinguished Professor of Māori Studies and renowned New Zealand author, has received the title of New Zealander of the Year for her services in Māori and Pacific studies.

The title, awarded by Kiwibank, acknowledges her outstanding service to the country and the inspiration she has given to New Zealanders through her achievements.

The award was presented at a gala dinner held at Auckland’s Langham Hotel on 28 February. “It was so moving and so special to me because it came from the grassroots and flax roots of New Zealand. It was an extraordinary evening,” says Dame Anne.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon expressed the University’s pride in Dame Anne’s outstanding service to New Zealand and New Zealanders. “It is an honour to have her on staff at the University, and on everyone’s behalf I offer her our heartfelt congratulations.”

Dame Anne received a custom-made New Zealand trophy and $5,000 towards her work from principal sponsor Kiwibank.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The election for graduate representatives on the University Council in October enables alumni to influence their alma mater’s future.

The term of one representative, Kate Sutton, is due to expire at that time, necessitating a Court of Convocation election. Nominations for the position will be sought in September. Please watch @auckland for details or visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz and click “Benefits and services”.

The University Council has 18 members — a mixture of lay, staff, student and graduate representatives variously appointed, elected and holding office ex officio. The ability to choose three members gives alumni important influence in setting the University’s strategy and direction.

Alumni keen to be involved in their University’s governance should put themselves forward. Equally they might consider nominating fellow alumni with the enthusiasm, ideas and commitment to make a worthwhile contribution to Council. Nearly 110,000 alumni will be eligible to vote in the election.

Please contact advancement@auckland.ac.nz with any inquiries about the nomination process or the forthcoming election.

NEW ZEALANDER OF THE YEAR

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RIDE TO CONQUER CANCER

Alumni and friends are being asked to get on their bikes – to help raise funds to support the ground-breaking work that our researchers at the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre (ACSRC) are conducting.

The Ride to Conquer Cancer initiative has been run successfully in Australia and Canada and is now coming to New Zealand. The two-day, 200km ride will bring together riders, cancer survivors, researchers and supporters to help the Cancer Society Auckland support research and clinical
trials at the ACSRC, based at the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. Associate Professor Adam Patterson, Leader of the Translational Therapeutics Team at the ACSRC, is up for the challenge: “It is an honour to support ‘The Ride to Conquer Cancer’ both personally and professionally. I often remind myself and my research team that each and every day over 50 people in New Zealand are diagnosed with cancer and more than 20 will die from cancer. I have witnessed the sadness and despair as this dark shadow passes over family and friends; no one is safe. I have dedicated my working life to inventing and developing new treatments for this terrible disease. Right now we have a promising new drug called PR610 in clinical trials in Auckland City and Waikato Hospitals, and several more in experimental development.”

“I and the ‘Translational Therapeutics Team’ are cycling to help raise funds to ensure these treatments can reach the people who so desperately need them. I am deeply proud of their unshakable commitment to improving the lives of those in need.”

The Ride to Conquer Cancer will run from November 16-17. All interested in taking part or supporting others are asked to visit the website: www.conquercancer.org.nz or phone 09 887 RIDE (7433)

HONOURED WRITER

Emeritus Professor of English, Albert Wendt is the Honoured New Zealand Writer for a special session at the 2013 Auckland Writers and Readers Festival.

Since his first novel in 1973, Sons For The Return Home, Albert (CNZM) has continued to break new ground as a novelist, poet, playwright, short story writer and artist. In 2012 alone he published the poetry collection From A Manoa Garden to Ponsonby and the short story collection Ancestry.

To celebrate his accomplishments, this session on 19 May will bring the sounds of the Pacific to the stage: live Samoan music; excerpts from Albert’s writing read by leading writers; and Albert himself, who will distil his life and writing with Robert Sullivan.

Another of the University’s Pacific writers, Dr Selina Tusitala Marsh, features in the festival’s Poetry Idol event where poets go head-to-head for the Festival Champion crown. Professor of English Brian Boyd introduces Sir Lloyd Geering who will speak on “How Humans Made God” for the Michael King lecture. Professor Dame Anne Salmond, Associate Professor Damon Salesa and Professor Manying Ip join Paul Diamond to discuss New Zealand-ness with Distinguished alumnus Sir Don McKinnon in a session entitled “Who are ya?”

See www.writersfestival.co.nz

Poems by alumni

Many of New Zealand’s most accomplished and admired poets are alumni of The University of Auckland. In honour of all alumni poets, aspiring poets and readers of poetry, we here introduce a new series of poems by alumni. The first chosen for publication is “In Other Words,” by doctor and poet Glenn Colquhoun (BA 1988; BHB 1993; MBChB 1997, Distinguished Alumnus 2005).

“In Other Words” was published in a collection called An Explanation of Poetry to My Father, published by Steele Roberts. It is reprinted here with permission from the author and the publisher.

In Other Words

In other words a poem is a way of knowing you are alive as shocking as fish leaping out of deep water as sharp as light stabbing through a row of trees, as bold as opening up your eyes during prayer as simple as lying awake in the middle of the night listening to the sound of people snoring. Every minute of every day of every life is a full library.

Make your existing degree business ready

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www.gsm.auckland.ac.nz
“I grew up at Tūrangawaewae Marae on the banks of the Waikato River,” says Dr Marama Muru-Lanning. “I know about its flooding and currents, its high and low water lines. I know about the safe places for swimming, and the least dangerous places to jump into it from the bridges. I remember the mists and living in fog, days of being cold to the bone. I know the smell of the river. I crossed it every day to get to school.

“The river is my ancestor, my Tupuna Awa.”

The Waikato River has also been in recent months at the centre of a legal controversy which has struck to the heart of our national psyche. The legal – and moral – arguments concern the rights of ownership, access and guardianship of the water of this river, and, by extension, of our other New Zealand waterways. It is an issue which has come to the fore through the decision of the present Government to embark upon the partial sales (49 percent) of our state-owned power companies, including Mighty River Power, which generates its electricity from dams on the Waikato River that have until this time been fully state-owned.

It is also an issue that Marama has studied deeply for her PhD and for a book (working title: Tupuna Awa, River Ancestor: The People of the Waikato River) to be published next year by Auckland University Press. When she began her research in 2003 – even when she finished her PhD in 2010 – she had no idea that her scholarly endeavours would have such immediate political relevance. Her thesis has now become a resource of knowledge for those who need – or wish for – a deeper understanding of the significance of the Waikato river in restoring Waikato Māori status and mana, and of the complexities involved in decision-making around the rights to water. It has shown that the Waikato River lies at the heart of Māori tribal identity and chiefly power and is therefore a key focus of ongoing local struggles for prestige and mana.

The focus of Marama’s thesis was on the three major groups with an interest in and an influence on issues of ownership of the Waikato River: Māori iwi and hapū whose ancestral lands border the river; Mighty River Power; and the Crown. Her study examined the complexity of perspectives within and between those three groups in relation to rights, responsibilities, and “ownership”. She also looked closely at how those perspectives change – and how those changes are reflected in, and very often influenced by, the language used to describe them.

“New terminology was introduced by the new power-brokers of the river,” says Marama. “When you want to change a relationship you create a new term or alter the meaning of an existing term.” A potent example, she says, is “Tupuna Awa”, River Ancestor, a term she grew up with as an essential part of her identity and that of others who belonged to her marae. A newer term that has replaced it in some contexts...
research, and the fact that if it were poorly done that would reflect back on my whānau.*

Second, as the first Māori member of staff in social anthropology since the department separated from Māori studies in the 1990s as well as the only social anthropologist to be engaged in Māori research, she was breaking new ground and needed to prove herself. “I needed to convince my supervisors”, she says, “both of whom were from overseas, that as a social anthropologist coming from the ‘inside’ work harder, to be absolutely meticulous in clarifying her thoughts, and to strive to produce high-quality journal articles. She has great respect for the strength of scholarship of her supervisors, Professor Cris Shore and Professor Veronica Strang, and is grateful for the continuing staunch support of prominent social anthropologists, Dame Joan Metge and Associate Professor Judith Huntsman, as well as the Head of the Department of Anthropology, Professor Simon Holdaway.

I asked Marama if she has formed an opinion – through her background or her research – on the prospective partial sale of Mighty River Power.

“I am very much against the sale,” she says.

“When the power stations use water, what is flowing through those turbines is our Tupuna Awa. The water as it flows is captured in man-made lakes and stored until it is needed. Control over the flow means control over the ecosystems. The resulting changes in depth and temperature affect the life in the river, and the activities on the river. If you sell those dams you are in effect selling ‘rights’ to control and use the water, and to affect its properties in many ways.”

When the use of the water was for the benefit of all New Zealanders, Marama was able to accept its use by the power company. But with the sale of assets, she says, that makes it quite different.

“When you sell off assets you dispossess a lot of New Zealanders. Suddenly the people who can afford shares are the new owners of those rights. And those who buy the shares can on-sell the rights.

“I do not believe it is fair or reasonable.”

For more insights from Marama on rights and interests in the Waikato River, see the video, soon to be seen on the Ingenio website: www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz. Click on “Benefits and services” and then “Publications”.

Photo: Princess Te Puea Herangi (seated) with (left to right) Marama’s grandmother, Hinerangi Hikuroa, Rev. AJ Seamer and Mori Ellison from Ngāi Tahu.

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In fact, in the end, said Marama, this need to prove herself motivated her to

- notably in discussions leading up to a Deed of Settlement made in 2009 between the Waikato-Tainui iwi and the Crown – is “Te Awa Tupuna”, Ancestral River, which “expresses a different relationship”.

The strength of her study, Marama believes, is that it has clarified some of the ways in which the key stakeholders are defining the river, and has shown that not all Māori along the river have been thinking in the same way. “The Māori groups at each location along the river have their own stories, their own mana, there are differences in what they want and the way they, as kaitiaki and as owners, approached ‘the Crown’. The term kaitiaki is not defined in the Western way but carries a number of meanings relating to shared ownership, harvesting rights, and rights to use the river for defined purposes at particular times.

Marama’s iwi affiliations are Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto and Ngāti Whātua. Her local marae, Tārangawaewae in Ngāruawāhia, stands at the centre of the Kingitanga (Māori King Movement), which was established in the 1850s to resist the confiscation of land. Marama’s grandparents accompanied Kingitanga leader Princess Te Puea Herangi on her journey up the Waikato River in the 1920s to found the marae. Tārangawaewae, which has always been a centre for peaceful protest has in recent years become the principal site in which Māori leaders from all over New Zealand gather to discuss vital issues around property rights in water. It has also become a centre of resistance against the sale of state-owned assets.

A further – and slightly ironical – link with a different stakeholder was the two years Marama spent, before commencing her higher education, in an administration position with the entity ECNZ, which later became Mighty River Power.

All these connections offer huge benefits of insight in a study of this kind, but also throw up challenges.

First, as a Māori, embedded in her community, with strong loyalties and a deep knowledge and respect for the values of her participants, Marama was aware of the need to build relationships of trust, and to conform not only with the University’s ethical requirements but also to conduct her research in accordance with the strict ethical protocols of the different Māori groups.

“Before commencing my PhD study I went on a hikoi along the length of the river with a number of Māori elders who introduced me to the sacred sites and asked permission of the local people for me to do the research... I had to show a lot of integrity, honesty and humility because of the importance of the

research and the fact that it were poorly done that would reflect back on my whānau.”

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Over the last 130 years The University of Auckland has played a major part in the development of Auckland and New Zealand.

To celebrate this fact, Student Information and Marketing Services is producing a set of 12 videos to showcase the University’s historic buildings and the wealth of talent that lie within.

The videos are full of academic superstars. The talent includes University luminaries such as Emeritus Professor Rangarui Walker, Distinguished Professor Jane Harding and Professor Raewyn Dalziel. People from the wider community who are connected to the University also contribute.

The content for the videos is diverse, ranging from an exploration of the University Art collection to a look at Auckland University Press and its contribution to the world of publishing in New Zealand. Summer Shakespeare’s humble beginnings 50 years ago are brought to life through the help of, among others, an interview with Emeritus Professor Nicholas Tarling – one of the earliest cast members and board member of the AUSA Outdoor Shakespeare Trust.

The best part of the project for producer Naomi Bradshaw (Advertising and Promotions Manager), has been the collaboration between faculties and service divisions and the unravelling of stories that she believes are inspiring and good to share with “our community of students and staff and the wider Auckland community”. One that stands out is the McGregor Museum at the School of Biological Sciences, a treasure trove for natural history buffs and biology teachers that “people wouldn’t even know is there”.

In addition to the videos are the heritage trail and art trail phone apps. Available as part of the University phone app, the self-guided tours can be found under the maps functionality. The heritage tour provides an insight into the seaside community that Auckland City once was, where wealthy traders built their homes along Princes St, creating family fortunes whose names we still know today, such as the Nathans (Alfred Nathan House).

“One of the things I am most excited about is the impact of the videos and apps,” says Naomi. “I walk through the University past buildings like the Clock Tower and my perception of everything has changed because I know the history behind it all.”

Kate Pitcher

To see the videos visit www.auckland.ac.nz/history
For the apps visit www.auckland.ac.nz/app
WHY ADULTS SHOULD PLAY

Play is the beginning of hope. Hope is a leap of the imagination.

When my daughter was two she was hospitalised nearly 30 times with severe asthma.

It meant that often at three in the morning an ambulance would race her, my wife and me into the hospital. A drip in her little arm would miraculously bring her back from the precipice. It was a long, hard winter and in the spring as she improved I saw her one night in her bedroom with her toy pink rabbit. She was miming putting a drip into his paws, and gently, lovingly explaining this would make him better.

My daughter’s play that night was not some trivial and peripheral activity. In terms of dealing with the confusion of life for her at that age it had central importance. She created a fictional world in her play so that she could better make sense of her real world. In her real life she was powerless and the world, in the form of the doctor, acted on her. In the fictional world, however, she was the doctor and took control and power over the events in her life.

In this simple story we can see the potential in pretending, and the rich possibility of play.

All children, in all cultures, create pretend worlds to better understand their own worlds. As children, to understand our mothers, we step inside her shoes and wander around in them as we imagine ourselves as her. These simple steps in someone else’s shoes are the beginning of empathy, of understanding ourselves in others. And yet these steps are vital for as novelist Ian McEwan reminds us: “Imagining what it is like to be someone else other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion and it is the beginning of morality.”

Play provides us with the means to make sense of our own world and then to explore what the world is like for others. It also allows us to imagine who we might become, how we might begin to see our lives and our worlds differently to how they are. Play frees the imagination to consider new possibilities, new ways of seeing. Children who lack the opportunities to play become limited in how they understand their present lives and how they might change them. Parents and teachers need to provide opportunities for children to play and pretend with other children. Social imagined play is vital for the development of language, of skills in negotiation, and in building levels of empathy.

When we are children we play in and through our bodies, learning in and through all our senses. Disembodied learning, focusing on literacy and numeracy standards, privileges other ways of knowing and schooling marks for many children the death of imaginative and creative worlds. As we age and we put away childish things many adults stop playing. Yet our most successful scientists, artists, business owners and philosophers are set apart because they have retained their ability to play with ideas, to imagine new possibilities and empathetically engage with others.

Research tells us clearly that the more we play as children and the longer we are able to hold onto play in our adult lives the more successful we are. Not merely in monetary terms but in our ability to sustain meaningful relationships, to create lives of value and meaning to those we live among.

Adults need to play more to reconnect to the lives of their childhood, when all things still remained possible. They need to play more so they can reconnect with their bodies and their senses. They need to skip and dance and pretend because it makes themselves and others feel better about the world, their place in it and how the world might be different in the morning. Adults need to play to remind themselves that there is more to life than work, more to life than struggle, more to life than getting and spending. Play is important for us as individuals but it is vital to the success of communities. Play is the beginning of hope. Hope is a leap of the imagination, a playful joy in realising you do not have to live and die in the world you were born into. A world without play and without hope is a world devoid of humanity. Play is the beating heart of humanity, something to be cherished in children and to be joyfully retained into old age.

Peter O’Connor

Associate Professor Peter O’Connor, Director of the Critical Research Unit in Applied Theatre in the University’s Faculty of Education, is an internationally recognised expert in applied theatre. Peter spoke about the importance of play at Auckland Brain Day, held at the University on 13 March during Brain Awareness Week, with the theme of “Your creative brain”. See videos of the Brain Day Presentations on www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/faculty/cbr/brainweek/
Options of last resort

Imagine a woman with a progressive, terminal condition who is dependent on a ventilator to breathe. She has come to see her situation as intolerable and after discussions with her family and the various health care professionals caring for her, asks that the ventilator be removed. After consultation this duly happens and the woman dies. This option is legally available in New Zealand.

Now imagine a woman who also has a progressive, terminal condition who can breathe on her own but who has no medical treatment to withdraw or withhold. She also feels her situation is intolerable and would like to die. For her the options to die sooner rather than later are very limited. No doctor in New Zealand may assist her to die, whether that entails giving her a lethal dose of medication that she can take on her own (physician-assisted dying), or actively ending her life with a lethal dose of medication (euthanasia).

In the first scenario, removing the ventilator from the woman causes her death. She did not die of the underlying condition for if she were not removed from the ventilator she would continue to live.

What is surely significant here are the reasons that the doctors in the first scenario complied with her request to disconnect the ventilator. No doubt these concerned deeply-held views about her quality of life, her suffering, her prognosis and life expectancy. And yet the woman in the second scenario may have identical reasons for wanting to die. The act of causing death is not the significant issue but rather the justification given for acting. Whether a doctor in either of these scenarios intended the death of the patient or merely foresaw the death is surely irrelevant. What matters is why they acted in the way they did, given the particular context in question.

I believe such practices can be ethically justified as appropriate last resort options at the end of life.
Mercy killing

Euthanasia is another word for mercy killing. Mercy killing may be either active or passive. While active euthanasia is currently proscribed by law, passive euthanasia, or letting die, seems more equivocal and may, at least in some circumstances, be regarded as consistent with good medical practice. In reality euthanasia, as assisted suicide, is the intentional killing by an act or an omission of someone whose life is considered to be not worth living. While calls to legalise voluntary euthanasia have all the appeal of being benevolent and compassionate, they skip lightly over the reality that the request of a patient seeking assisted suicide may often be quite ambivalent. Seeking euthanasia may mask a need for reassurance that, in fact, the person is loved and valued despite their physical decline. The problem is that the legal sanctioning of euthanasia would give the signal that such a person has no further usefulness. The implicit message is that the person no longer possesses any intrinsic worth, and may be disposed of. If there is any currency in the notion of the sanctity of human life, euthanasia does not affirm it.

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Options at the end of life. Yet this is no trivial issue – ethics illuminates one aspect of the debate – we need to hear other views and other voices. What do you think?

Phillipa Malpas PhD
Senior Lecturer in Clinical Medical Ethics
Department of Psychological Medicine
Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

A compassionate response

Mortality is our constant companion, but perhaps we don’t think about that until confronted with it in our own lives or the lives of others. Our consumerised, technologised society may insulate us from thinking about death, but perennial debates about euthanasia keep it from disappearing from our public discourse. In particular, these discussions make us ask what a “good death” might look like and, by implication, what might be a “good life”.

Religious traditions have their own narratives about life and death, so discussions about choices to actively end a human life for any reason raise significant questions for both individuals and the religious institutions they belong to. While these questions are framed in religious language I believe they overlap with wider questions we must ask ourselves about what we consider both a “good life” and a “good death”.

For example, wrestling with the sovereignty of God versus human freedom may seem like a purely religious matter, but that conversation raises the wider question as to whether the sanctity of life is now a purely outdated religious concept. Similarly, tensions between social responsibility and individual rights – the latter often framed in the language of personal autonomy and choice – intersect with wider questions about

Other compassionate responses, such as better investment and research into palliative care, must be considered first.
I get a small thrill to see alumna Professor Margaret Brimble’s email flash up in my inbox. “What do you think of this as a title for my talk?” she asks. “‘Using molecular chess to mine nature’s medicine chest?’”

Margaret is one of New Zealand’s most feted scientists: she is the winner of the 2012 Rutherford Medal, the highest award of the Royal Society of New Zealand (RSNZ), and only the second woman to win it in its 21-year history; the 2012 winner of the RSNZ’s MacDiarmid Medal for outstanding scientific application to human benefit and the Hector Medal for outstanding work in the chemical sciences, she became a CNZM 2012, received a World Class New Zealand Award in 2008 and is the first and only New Zealander to become a L’Oreal-UNESCO Women in Science Laureate for Materials Science in 2007.

All this and more, and she is asking me for help with the title of the Rutherford Lecture Series she will deliver around the country this year. “What about ‘playing’ molecular chess,” I tap back.

“I like it,” she replies quickly. And then is back a minute later: “What about ‘mastering’?”

I don’t hear from her again but suspect she’ll have gone with “mastering” because that’s in fact what this 51-year-old University of Auckland Professor of Organic and Medicinal Chemistry does. She is a modern-day alchemist, masterfully turning natural products such as shellfish toxins and compounds isolated from rare fungi into new drugs to fight cancer, Alzheimer’s, heart and neurodegenerative diseases.

“Nature throws up complicated chemical structures that have evolved over thousands of years for a specific purpose,” she says. “If we can fine-tune their molecular structure we can create potential drugs even better than nature can provide.”

Take marine algae produced during coastal blooms, for example. The algae produce natural toxins as a defence mechanism against predators but these toxins also activate specific receptors in the human brain. “This has implications for people suffering from schizophrenia and Alzheimer’s so we’re synthesising the toxins in the laboratory. We then model the active features of the molecule and try different versions, in different positions, until we come up with the ideal drug.”

Natural products provide unlimited opportunity for discovery at the interface with biology and medicine. Some 63 percent of all new drugs approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, for example, are inspired by, or made from, natural products. Even so Margaret compares creating a synthetic compound from nature to the logic and rationale behind a game of chess. “Sometimes you get really close, but you can’t quite complete the synthesis, so you haven’t got checkmate.”

She says it may take as little as a month to identify and characterise a natural molecule, but it can take years to figure out how to make it. “It demands academic and manipulative rigour, creativity, dedication, persistence and hard work. It’s like composing a piece of music or creating a beautiful artwork.”

One of Margaret’s greatest successes to date is modifying a naturally occurring peptide that is found in the brain after traumatic brain injury that helps prevent secondary cell death. She and her team have created 120 similar versions of the natural peptide. One of these, NNZ2566, is more stable and better able to cross the blood-brain barrier than the natural
version. With $23 million in funding from the US army, the drug is now in Phase 2b human clinical trials and is being tested by NZ-based company Neuren Pharmaceuticals Ltd. in trauma centres around the world. It could benefit a wide range of patients from those suffering concussion, head injury or ballistic head wounds to stroke sufferers.

As well as for humans, Margaret’s chemistry has growing application in the agricultural arena. Her team is collaborating with Plant & Food Research to investigate microbial proteins produced by potato tubers that may work as a potential treatment for kiwifruit afflicted with Pseudomonas syringae pv. Actinidae (Psa). Under contract to Landcare Research, Margaret’s team has produced a new effective version of an old rat poison called norbormide. “We took the original drug and added a pro-drug,” she explains. “This masks some of the functionality so that it doesn’t have its original taste which rats have come to dislike. Once they’ve ingested the drug, it then gets unmasked in the rats’ bodies and kills them.”

Professor Joerg Kistler, Director of the University’s Institute for Innovation in Biotechnology, says Margaret is working at the international cutting edge of complex medicinal chemistry. “What sets her apart from mainstream chemists is her outstanding innovation skills.”

Adds Dr Di McCarthy, Chief Executive of RSNZ. “Margaret brings not only excellence and precision to her research but intellectual creativity, drive and diversity. She’s a fantastic role model for other women in science - and we really need them.”

Margaret grew up in Mt Roskill with four siblings during the 60s. “I did third form biology and hated it,” she laughs. “I remember running out of class because I couldn’t dissect the rat. I had to leave. So there was no way I could go to medical school. The pressure was always there. If you’re academically gifted you should go to medical school.”

She was dux at Diocesan School for Girls and then enrolled at The University of Auckland in two subjects during her second year. “I remember making aspirin. I just really enjoyed making things – I spent hours in the labs – and then I understood that organic chemistry was making things so I studied it at masters level and decided that was the area I wanted to pursue.”

She won a scholarship to do her PhD at Southampton University and ironically in light of her recent agricultural work made an antibiotic that treated coccidial infections in poultry. After England she returned to New Zealand to a lectureship at Massey University. Then she went to Sydney University and was promoted to associate professor. While there she became pregnant (her daughter Rebecca is now 14) and she and her husband Mark, who works in IT, decided to return to New Zealand. “We didn’t want to spend two hours commuting to work each day.”

Margaret was employed at her alma mater to set up New Zealand’s first medicinal chemistry degree. She reflects on how hard she’s worked since and no, she says: “I couldn’t have had a second child and have achieved what I have.”

Today she has some 20 PhDs on her floor (“I started with three”), is Chair of Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, a Principal Investigator and member of the management committee for the Maurice Wilkins Centre for Molecular Biodiscovery, Chair of the RSNZ’s Rutherford Foundation which identifies and develops promising young researchers, Associate Editor for Organic and Biomolecular Chemistry (a Royal Society of Chemistry Journal) and President-elect of the Organic and Biomolecular Division of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry.

Margaret has supervised more than a hundred postgraduate students (including 45 PhD students), says Joerg Kistler. “She is a superb mentor with an outstanding ability to convey her enthusiasm in science to many young people.”

“Think big and do big science that will be noticed outside New Zealand,” says Margaret. “She attributes much of her own success to working with a really good team. ‘They’re what makes me get out of bed each day.’

“I wonder if a pristine, tidy desk has something to do with it too. When I arrive on the fifth floor of the Chemistry building for the interview, she sits composed behind a shiny clear desk wearing a turquoise blue shirt, silver earrings and necklace. At first I’m tempted to wonder if she’s the receptionist and a mad, genius scientist with papers and books bursting everywhere is through the next door. ‘I can’t handle mess,’ she tells me. “My computer system is all organised… look there’s a real system in there.” She shows me all the folders lined up on her desktop. “My house is always tidy too… there’s not a speck of dust anywhere.”

Off the record several people tell me that around the University some find Margaret’s tremendous focus difficult to take. “She lives and breathes chemistry,” says Di McCarthy. “One of the most beautiful things in the world to Margaret is a molecular structure.” Margaret wouldn’t argue with that. She puts in long hours, takes academic papers to the beach, travels all over the world to give lectures and meet colleagues. And keeps her eye on the future.

“I’d like to see a self-sustaining medicinal chemistry centre up and running in New Zealand with a critical mass of funding flowing into it from overseas; and I’d like to see our drug NNZ2-566 go to market. If it does it will be the first drug for traumatic brain injury,” she points out. “And it will put The University of Auckland and New Zealand on the international map as a world class hub for drug discovery and development.”

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Pictured: Margaret with her daughter Rebecca
Gareth Farr’s gift to New Zealand is a growing collection of extraordinary music – for Gamelan, for orchestra, for solo violin, for percussion octet, for clarinet… to be played in concert halls, night clubs, theatres and opera houses.

His range is astonishing, his originality remarkable, his musical colour kaleidoscopic. Yet Gareth might never have been a professional musician if it hadn’t been for the timely encouragement of singer and songwriter Don McGlashan.

“I was lucky enough to be in a tiny alternative high school when the wonderful, amazing Don McGlashan took the role of music teacher for a year. He was in a percussion-based new music group that was doing the most fascinating rhythmic things, with Wayne Laird who is in music production now and Phil Dadson, who teaches [sometimes] at Elam. All three were creating incredible work which Don was then coming along and teaching us.”

Sixteen-year-old Gareth had always played the piano but “had no idea there was such a thing as a music career”, and was diffident when Don suggested he audition for a performance degree in percussion. “Just give it a go,” was Don’s response. “They’ll see the potential even if there’s no experience.”

Don was right, and Gareth was enrolled in the University’s School of Music, where his next musical “epiphany” established the direction of his future career.

In the first year everyone has to do “a little bit of composition,” says Gareth. The first assignment was “to sit in the city or in a park and write a graphic score of all the sounds you hear. So a dog barks or a truck brakes and you have to figure out a way of annotating that – I came away thinking: ‘Oh! Oh! Oh! This is really cool.’” The next assignment was to write a piece of music inspired by the experience. “This time I thought: ‘This is really cool. It is all good. I’ve just got to do it.’”

So, encouraged by another inspirational teacher, Professor John Rimmer, Gareth switched to a double major in percussion and composition. From that moment on, he was a composer.

Gareth has composed for the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Auckland Philharmonia, the New Zealand String Quartet. His music has been commissioned for numerous ballet, film and theatrical productions, including Witi Ihimaera’s Woman Far Walking, and was featured in the Sydney Opera House at the Sydney Olympics Festival, with two pieces, one for a kapa haka group plus orchestra, “which hasn’t been done very often”, and the other a concerto for world-
renowned solo percussionist Evelyn Glennie.

Sitting in the audience Gareth felt “like an Olympic athlete overseas representing New Zealand. I remember the excitement of being there and hearing it come to life – a concept, a piece of music that has been theoretical until suddenly you’ve got an audience and it’s a real thing.”

Though his musical influences are culturally diverse – including a strong base of classical music (with Shostakovich among his favourites), a deep attachment to Rarotongan drumming (dating from his teenage years around Grey Lynn in Auckland) and a passion for the Gamelan percussion orchestras of Indonesia (first discovered with a sense of revelation at a concert in the Maidment Theatre) – Gareth is widely regarded as a quintessentially New Zealand composer.

How has he earned that reputation? I ask. “The only way I can answer that,” he says on reflection, “is with the truth – that my music has always been honest about reflecting my surroundings. And so in that respect there is nothing I could possibly be except a quintessentially New Zealand composer, because all I’m doing is processing my environment and then not forcing the music but just letting it come out.

“And that’s a bit of an analogy for the rest of my life. I came out of the closet at 16. I just knew that was something I had to do and it wasn’t easy. But my goodness, I’m so glad.”

He acknowledges that, with loving and supportive parents who worked in the arts (“half the people I knew when I was growing up were gay”), the external pressures were not the problem so much as his own agonising and self-examining. “The weird irony is the only time I was ever given a hard time for my sexuality was being called ‘Poof’ at primary school and intermediate – before I even knew I was gay”), the external pressures were not allowed to, pull out all the stops, to go from one extreme to another – from using drums for doing something right in your face and visceral to a real subtle ominous rumble underneath what was going on.

“For the battle, I haven’t got the sound of horses, I haven’t got the sound of war bugles. I haven’t got the clashing swords. I’ve done it musically with brass and percussion and rhythm and darkness in a very orchestral, epic way.”

“The extreme contrasts I love because it means the audience never quite knows what you’re going to do next, and that element of surprise can be incredibly exciting.”

This also might be seen as an analogy for the rest of Gareth’s life. The first appearances of his percussion-playing alter ego, drag queen Lilith LaCroix, came as a surprise to those who had seen him only in an orchestral setting. I asked Gareth what importance Lilith has in his music and his life.

“I used to really love the idea of being able to get away with doing different things – in collaboration with its director, renowned Shakespearean actress Lisa Harrow. Gareth and Lisa worked so well together they are now looking at doing another joint project.

Says Lisa: “It was thrilling to be able to express what I wanted verbally and have Gareth present it back to me musically... [The overture] had to represent a solid, strong, responsible, proud civilisation. And because we were starting in daylight outdoors, you don’t have that wonderful moment you have in the theatre when the audience settles, the lights go down, you go to black and then you start. Instead you have people talking to their friends and suddenly the play’s starting. I wanted to make them sit up and say: ‘Oh my God, we’re watching King Lear’. The music had to take them by the throat.”

Says Gareth: “The play is so dark that Lisa and I immediately agreed on a restricted musical colour palate. We knew that strings for example would be just too romantic, even, dare I say it, too feminine, because Lisa’s vision of the play is a very masculine world, a bloodthirsty, power-thirsty world. I was able to, allowed to, pull out all the stops, to go from one extreme to another – from using drums for doing something right in your face and visceral to a real subtle ominous rumble underneath what was going on.

“Now I have to learn to say: ‘No. That’s a fine project for someone else, but it doesn’t make my tyres squeal.’

“What I want to do now is make sure I only do projects that make me happy. It’s all about me.” He laughs again, and makes me laugh as well.
Climate change is endangering life within the ocean. Biological scientist Mary Sewell speaks with Margo White about the alarming results of her research on some of the most vulnerable sea creatures.

Associate Professor Mary Sewell of the School of Biological Sciences has been studying echinoderms – sea urchins, sea cucumbers, starfish – since she was an undergraduate.

In particular, she has looked at how they might be affected by change. As she has discovered, one of the most rapid changes facing these organisms is ocean acidification, sometimes known as “the other CO2 problem”.

Scientists have long known that our seas – 70 percent of the planet – absorb around 30 percent of the earth’s carbon dioxide, which has tempered some of the effects of the billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide we have emitted since industrialisation. But now the chemistry of the seas is changing, at a rate of 0.1 pH units per century.

A drop of 0.1 pH units might not sound like much, but like the Richter scale used to measure earthquakes, a small change in pH represents changes in the order of magnitude, in this case the concentration of hydrogen ions.

“By 2100 seawater will be 150 percent more corrosive than at present,” says Mary. “We’ve never seen this rate of change before. In previous times, changes have occurred over the course of hundreds of thousands of years not in less than 100 years.”

Ocean acidification has been linked to depressed metabolic rates in jumbo squid, depressed immune systems in blue mussels and depressed nervous systems in clown fish. The greatest effects, however, have been shown in shell-forming marine creatures, such as echinoderms. When CO2 is absorbed by water, carbonic acid is formed, which reduces the amount of carbonate ions available to form calcium carbonate – the mineral many marine creatures use to build shells and skeletons. This more corrosive seawater can also eat away at existing shells.

The (long-term) future is looking particularly vulnerable for those living in southern oceans. “As colder environments already have lower levels of calcium carbonate, it’s already quite hard for the organisms in those environments to calcify. So some have suggested that the southern oceans are the canary in the coalmine, and will tell us what is really going to be happening in the future.”

Mary has mainly looked at the effects of ocean acidification on sea urchins. Working with scientists at the University of California, Santa Barbara, she investigated how the Antarctic sea urchin and the purple sea urchin have responded to different pH conditions in the lab and found that larvae grown in more acid conditions showed signs of development delay, and grew to a smaller size. There were other physiological differences too – such as shorter arms in the purple sea urchin, the apparatus the organism depends on to catch phytoplankton.

In short, all evidence suggests life can only get tougher for those sea urchins inhabiting oceans of the future. More recently, she has investigated the impact on Evechinus chloroticus, commonly known as kina, and has found similar results.

Much of the research into the effects of ocean acidification has focused on the entire organism, but Mary and her team are now trying to identify the mechanisms involved. “We can see there is an effect: that they are smaller and develop slightly more slowly, but we want to tease apart what is happening. So we’re looking at the metabolic rate and mitochondrial function.”

“But we’re also taking a systems biology approach – looking at gene expression patterns, protein expression patterns, and also the metabolites, the products of metabolism. We’re analysing that at present, but we already have clues that there are major changes going on in the animal when they’re subjected to high CO2 conditions.”

Research into oceanic acidification is relatively recent, but scientists are beginning to understand how this will affect individual species. While they can only speculate on how this will affect the wider ecosystem, Mary has little doubt the repercussions will be felt throughout the food chain. It will also have an economic impact; if climate change is going to affect our agricultural industry, spare a thought for the aquaculture industry.

“The bottom line is that we need to stop emitting so much CO2. Scientists have been telling policy makers this for some time, but there hasn’t been a good uptake of the message. But we’re putting ourselves in a very vulnerable position, so it’s better that we start to deal with this now.”

By 2100 seawater will be 150 percent more corrosive... We’ve never seen this rate of change before.
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The 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award winners gathered for a quiet photo shoot in a lush and shady spot in the grounds of Old Government House before heading into the sun light - and the limelight – for the DAA celebrations on 1 March.

Close to 500 people arrived for pre-dinner drinks on the lawn and were then ushered into the Alumni Marquee for the formal dinner and awards presentation.

“Distinguished alumni are the bedrock on which a great university sits, and a reflection of the potential the University community nurtures in our students of today and of the future,” said Master of Ceremonies Professor Jenny Dixon.

At the business end of the evening, our winners were presented with their medals and were invited to share a few insights with the audience.

Hon Jim McLay QSO, CNZM (LLB 1968) former politician and New Zealand’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York: “I’m often asked why it is that we engage so actively at the United Nations. It’s pretty simple really. In the small countries an international system based on the rule of law really is vital. It reduces opportunities for the strong to impose on the weak, it protects sovereignty, it levels the playing field, and in the process facilitates our prosperity.”

Andrew Patterson (BArch 1984), one of New Zealand’s most recognised architects, both locally and internationally: “In New Zealand we are defined, more than in most countries, by the beauty of our natural environment. My journey has been all about finding a critical process that enables our built environment to continue on that beauty. Architecture is all about modifying land for people. It’s the success of that relationship that creates beauty.”

Dr Jilly Evans (BSc 1973; MSc 1975), a scientist and innovator who has led major drug development programmes in Canada and the United States: “I have had the great privilege of working on diseases both common and rare. I am presently working in the cancer and fibrotic areas; for me these are very much still areas of unmet medical need and it gives me great pleasure to use my skills to the best of my ability.”

Norman Godden (BA 1971; MA 1979), a leader in New Zealand business for many years, including as founding partner of Sheffield Ltd: “The University of Auckland has been very, very good to me... When I decided to do my masters degree the University was flexible enough to allow me to do half in the Business School and half in the Arts faculty, where I was admitted to what was then a pioneering counselling programme... What a great combination for anyone building a human resources business: business studies and counselling psychology.”

Kim Goldwater (BE 1971), a pioneering Waiheke Island winemaker, who has won medals and accolades around the world: “Passion and success: they are interdependent; without that intrinsic passion I believe it is very difficult to achieve success. As a winemaker I’ve never been tempted to become a trophy hunter, always believing that if you make wine with real passion in your belly it will have that quintessential quality that discerning people will keenly seek out.”

Simon Denny (BFA 2005), 2013 Young Alumnus of the Year. In the words of Alumni Orator Associate Professor Caroline Daley: “Simon’s work has been described as ‘rethinking postmodernism’, he’s part of the Berlin ‘post-internet art scene’ where his work focuses on the ‘collision of old and new, digital and analogue, triangulated with current affairs and contemporary design’. He has exhibited around the world – Aspen, Berlin, Copenhagen, Dublin, Hamburg, London, Melbourne, Naples, Paris, Rome, Sydney, not to mention Hamilton, Christchurch and Dunedin. He’s won prizes, and had his works purchased for major collections. And by my reckoning he’s not yet [in fact, is just] 30.”

To see full video coverage of the DAA Dinner, including the winners’ acceptance speeches, visit the Alumni and Friends website: www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz

See the Ingenio website for a feature article by Miranda Playfair based on an interview with Simon Denny.

Photo: Back row, left to right are Hon Jim McLay, Dr Andrew Patterson and Simon Denny. Front row, left to right are Jilly Evans, Norman Godden and Kim Goldwater.
Insights, revelations and repartee were all on the agenda at "Auckland Live: 20/20 Vision" when our illustrious line-up of Distinguished Alumni gathered to face some lively and often irreverent questioning from fellow alumnus, facilitator and media commentator, Finlay Macdonald (BA 1984).

“You can have no better evidence of the qualities and talents it takes to be a Distinguished Alumnus,” says Finlay, “than the six recipients of this year’s awards. Collectively they span the worlds of engineering, wine-making, architecture, law, politics, the arts and medical science. They should just start a think tank and be done with it.

“In fact I think in the green room we were mistaken for a think tank,” he adds with a flash of a smile to the 250 guests gathered at the AMRF Auditorium at the Grafton Campus.

First in Finlay’s firing line was Norman Godden, a trustee of the Energy Education Trust and co-founder of the Sheffield Consulting Group which became an international consulting firm in human resources – “living proof that you really can go a long way with a BA”, said Finlay (Norman’s BA from The University of Auckland was later followed by a Master of Counselling).

One of Norman’s proud achievements during his many years of contact with the University was “persuading [Dr] John Hood to become Vice-Chancellor” – indeed an auspicious appointment.

Distinguished Alumna Dr Jilly Evans is right at the forefront of applied biochemical research and an international leader in drug development.

“What’s more,” said Finlay, “he’s so cool he’s had an arctic glacier named after him.”

Asked what he saw himself as - “essentially” - Jim acknowledged that he was “still very much the lawyer… Politics requires the same sorts of skills, the same sorts of interests”, but “the law is what I did. The politics came later. You don’t plan those things – and I certainly didn’t plan to become a Distinguished Alumnus”.

From the “House” the spotlight turned to houses, and Finlay turned his questions on Andrew Patterson, named by World Architecture News as one of the five most influential architects of the twentieth century.

The University’s School of Architecture, says Andrew, gave him a “fantastic education… The stand-out lesson, which wouldn’t take place in any other architecture school in the world, was when we were asked to build our own structure on Shoal Beach and then sleep the night in it.” He adds that they didn’t get very much sleep.

“Who owns your art?” asked Finlay, a philosophical question.

“A lot of people own my art”, a practical response.

Fittingly the event ended with a question from the audience about the importance of education. Andrew Patterson’s reply was succinct: “An education keeps your thinking fluid for longer.”
One: Distinguished Professor Bill Denny and Lisa Denny with nephew and 2013 Young Alumnus of the Year Simon Denny.  
Two: Master of Ceremonies and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Engagement) Professor Jenny Dixon.  
Three: Dean of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences Professor John Fraser, Karin Nielsen and Distinguished Professor Peter Hunter.  
Four: Dr Jennifer Te Paa-Daniel, who won a Distinguished Alumni Award in 2010.  
Five: Kay Stead and Emeritus Professor CK Stead, who won a Distinguished Alumni Award in 2008.  
Six: Anne and Nevil Gibson and the Director of Planning, Pamela Moss.  
Seven: Leanne Gibson, 2013 Distinguished Alumnus Norman Godden, Director of the Energy Centre Professor Basil Sharp, Louise Morra and Philip Vodanovich.  
Eight: Michael and Dianne Fisher, Hon Judith Tizard, Irene Fisher and Dame Cath Tizard.  
Nine: Helen Gallot, Margaret Tapper, Michael Horton, Dame Rosie Horton, Marie Quinn.
Ten: Professor Manying Ip and Dr Ming Ip. Eleven: The Head of the School of Music Dr Allan Badley, Pauline Shaddan and Satomi Suzuki-Badley. Twelve: The Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon. Thirteen: Mark Baines, Jo Shum. Fourteen: Soprano Bernice Austin. Fifteen: The Alumni Orator Associate Professor Caroline Daley. Sixteen: Distinguished Alumnus Kim Goldwater with the Patron of The University of Auckland Society, Dame Cath Tizard.

Seventeen: Dame Cath Tizard with Distinguished Alumna Dr Jilly Evans. Eighteen: Distinguished Alumnus Andrew Patterson with the President of The University of Auckland Society, Amy Malcolm. 

Photos: Godfrey Boehnke
An ambitious 20-year study is telling us about our identity as New Zealanders and how our ideas, attitudes and values are changing. Pauline Curtis investigates.

How much sexism is there in New Zealand? How do Māori and Pākehā feel about each other? And why have some people coped with the Christchurch earthquakes better than others?

Questions like these are being examined by the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS). Created by University of Auckland social psychologist Dr Chris Sibley, the NZAVS has become a large collaborative project involving researchers around the country, and is generating real interest overseas because there’s nothing quite like it anywhere in the world.

Chris studies the relationships between groups in society, for instance different ethnicities, genders or socioeconomic groups: “I’m interested in long-term societal change. My main area of research is looking at how you increase tolerance, decrease negative stereotypes, reduce discrimination, and promote wellbeing for everybody in the country.”

The NZAVS follows the same people – more than 6,000 at last count – every year, tracking everything from aspects of personality to their health and wellbeing, political attitudes, views on climate change, and ideas about New Zealand history and biculturalism.

“The study allows New Zealand-based researchers to hold a lens up to the psychology of what it means to be a New Zealander,” says Associate Professor Marc Wilson from Victoria University of Wellington, one of Chris’s long-term collaborators. “It also allows us to look at changes over time – but more than that it allows us to make inferences about what causes what.”

The NZAVS had just completed its first year of data collection when the 2011 Christchurch earthquake hit, providing dramatic proof of how a long-term study can capture changes in society and answer questions that cannot be examined any other way. There are hints from the study that aspects of personality may help some people to recover psychologically more rapidly than others. People who are higher on measures of “Emotional Stability” were more resilient to psychological distress following the earthquakes. However, these findings are still very new, and are being tested to confirm their validity. The next step will be to work out how to share those coping mechanisms with other people.

As a result of the earthquake the NZAVS now has a much greater focus on psychological wellbeing. “I really hope the study can be useful in talking about how people are doing and tracking recovery, and looking at the protective factors that might help,” Chris says.

The NZAVS also offered insight into longstanding questions about the role of religious faith following a crisis. Theories abound as to whether natural crises turn people toward or away from religion, and what support it may provide, but this was the first time large-scale, real-world data were available to directly test these ideas.

Chris and collaborator Dr Joseph Bulbulia from Victoria University found that Cantabrians bucked the national 50-year trend of a slow decline in religious affiliation, with a 3.4 percent increase after the earthquake. But religious conversion did not offer an extra “buffer” of support, as some theories suggest. In fact, people appeared to find support both within and outside of churches, and their levels of wellbeing were
comparable. Only those people who lost their religion reported reduced health after the earthquake, perhaps due to the loss of an important source of support. More research is planned, to look into this.

Events like the earthquake cannot be anticipated, though, and the main purpose of the study is to test very specific hypotheses.

One original goal of the NZAVS is to test a model developed by The University of Auckland’s Professor John Duckitt to describe how individual psychology may interact with social conditions to predict levels of prejudice and tolerance.

The model says two major factors predict prejudice in society: one is competition-based and the other threat-based. “So if I am afraid of you or view you as morally different, or if I see myself in competition with you, then that can lead to prejudice – but only when broader social factors, such as high levels of danger or inequality, also come into play,” says Chris.

The model is unique in social psychology in the way it links personality and environmental factors to identify two distinct processes leading to prejudice.

“I wanted to really test this out longitudinally, and to do that you need massive, nationally representative, population data. I set up the NZAVS with that as my goal, but the study has become so much bigger than that, because the data’s valuable for so many reasons and to so many different groups of people in New Zealand.”

The study provided the first opportunity in a large, national sample to bust the recurrent myth that “Pākehā” is a derogatory term. It showed that Māori and Pākehā have generally warm attitudes toward one another and, as Dr Carla Houkamau of The University of Auckland Business School explains: “The choice by Māori to use the term Pākehā was linked to how strongly they identify as Māori. The choice to use Te Reo is part of identity – rather than anything to do with Māori attitudes toward New Zealanders of European descent.”

Carla, who works often with Chris, explains that with the NZAVS “we can track different aspects of Māori identity – how much you like being Māori, how well you speak Māori, your spiritual beliefs – and make links with social, economic, cultural and wellbeing outcomes in a way that’s very useful for policymakers.”

“We’ve also been working hard to develop a questionnaire specifically for Māori peoples administered in parallel with the NZAVS,” says Carla. By finding out which aspects of Māori identity help people to do well, policymakers can make sure they’re being actively promoted.

In an entirely different realm, the NZAVS has examined whether narcissism – excessive feelings of entitlement and the belief that you are better than others – is increasing in New Zealand, in line with the “narcissism epidemic” in the United States. The data show that young New Zealanders are indeed more narcissistic than older people, but only time will tell whether they remain more narcissistic throughout life or whether this is a characteristic that mellows with age.

The study is also exploring sexist beliefs in New Zealand, and the good news is that there’s comparatively little overt or hostile sexism. But what about the less obvious, and potentially more sinister, phenomenon of benevolent sexism – traditional views of men and women’s roles that tend to keep people in their “place”?

PhD student Matt Hammond, with co-supervisors Chris and University of Auckland interpersonal relationships expert Dr Nickola Overall, is investigating this, and Matt’s work captured national attention with a cover story in the Listener this year.

Using the NZAVS he found that benevolent sexists are actually happier than non-sexists. The attitudes work in the favour of men, while benevolently sexist women are more satisfied with life because it provides a justification for the inequality they see. The result is that it’s very difficult for women to step outside the stereotypical role of delicate creatures in need of protection.

Chris says he would never have thought of the questions or ways that Matt and many others have used the data, and that the NZAVS is now so much bigger than his own “small area of interest”.

Setting up the study was a huge gamble for a young researcher. Now 34 years old, Chris is a senior lecturer at the University and spent his entire new-staff fund to get it started: “I literally wrote one cheque, to cover postage and printing for that first year,” sending the survey to a random sample of New Zealanders. “I didn’t have enough money secured to cover the data entry, or follow up on people over time – I was doing that all myself. But it’s worked.”

In the four years since, more and more collaborators and students have come on board, lending momentum to the work. “I’ve been so lucky to have such an enthusiastic, hard-working group of graduate students interested in the study,” he says. “You learn so much from them. I really enjoy that part of the job.”

Chris is especially grateful to Lara Greaves, an enterprising student who approached him after a second-year social psychology lecture to ask how she could contribute. She initially worked without pay just to keep the study going. She’s about to have her third academic paper published, and is now an honours student with Chris.

The NZAVS is still accepting new participants. More information can be found at: www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/uaa/new-zealand-attitudes-and-values-study
The small black and red-brown shape is almost invisible in the thick undergrowth, blending in with the dead leaves of the large Puriri and Kohekohe trees. One could easily miss it if it weren’t for the subtle rustling.

Suddenly the Saddleback looks up and tilts its head. It hesitates, calls out and, with the flick of its wings, is gone. But what stays is the feeling of having experienced something rare and special.

These close encounters are what make Tiritiri Matangi Island (Māori for “buffeted by the wind”) unique.

“Tiritiri looked quite different when I first visited with John Craig in May 1977,” says School of Environment senior lecturer and ecologist Dr Neil Mitchell. More than 600 years of human habitation and farming had left their mark on the island that was once covered in dense coastal forest and filled with bird calls. The slopes had been cleared to make room for stock; only six percent of the original bush and few birds remained.

But John and Neil saw Tiritiri’s potential. With vision, novel ideas and the help of countless volunteers they started what was to become one of the most important and exciting conservation projects in New Zealand’s history.

It all began by chance, or “serendipity”, as Neil calls it. In 1974 Dr John Craig, a specialist in bird behaviour, came to the University as a junior lecturer in zoology. While on the lookout for a new research area he heard that a group of Red-crowned Parakeets (Kakariki) had been released on Tiritiri Matangi Island, 30 kilometres north-east of central Auckland. The island had been used as farmland since the middle of the 19th century and was home to a lighthouse station which remains today. In 1971 it was declared a Recreation Reserve in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park and all cattle and sheep were removed to allow for natural regeneration.

Intrigued to see how the Kakariki fared in their new, less than natural, environment, John visited Tiritiri and discovered it was home not only to these new arrivals but also to other native species that had become rare or extinct on the mainland, such as Bellbirds and Little Blue Penguins. It was a paradise for ecologists.

Together with a group of postgraduate students and his research technician, Murray Douglas, John set up camp on the island, outfitted a derelict shearing shed on the beach with bunk beds made of drift wood and began to study Tiritiri’s unique fauna.

Polynesian rats (Kiore) that were plentiful on Tiritiri frequently found their way into the shed and eventually became another of John’s study subjects. “By today’s standards you would call our lodgings pretty gross,” John laughs.

But despite being beleaguered by rats and getting wet feet at high tide in their makeshift accommodation, the team produced some classic work on Tiritiri’s wildlife in those first years. Their studies showed that the small remaining patches of forest were barely enough to sustain the island’s birds. Contrary to the hopes of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Board no new tree and shrub growth was visible.

More research was required into why the island was not regenerating naturally, and John found the expertise needed in plant ecologist Neil Mitchell, who had joined the University in 1977. Neil set up projects with his students to monitor regeneration, and discovered that tree and shrub seeds were dispersed around the island but could not establish themselves in Tiritiri’s soil due to the thick grass cover and the dry, hard ground, compacted by stock for over 100 years.

The situation became desperate when a cyclone felled part of one of only two surviving Puriri trees that served as the sole winter food supply for the whole Bellbird population. John and Neil decided something needed to be done to sustain and grow the island’s key populations of rare birds.

* I had been involved in several tree-planting
programmes during my time in Britain,” explains Neil. “But it wasn’t something that was done in New Zealand at that time, not for the purpose of conservation.”

However, initial trials to grow native plants from seedlings proved successful. “We realised if we could get the plants into the ground they grew, and with the help of volunteers we could create enough habitat for Tiritiri’s birds and even introduce new species to the island that might have lived there in the past.”

But the vision didn’t stop there. In awareness that the public paid for most of New Zealand’s conservation efforts, John and Neil planned to open the island to visitors. (It had been officially classified as a scientific reserve in recognition of the University’s work.)

A first proposal to the Park Board in 1979 was received with an approving nod and a “Well, yes. Do it.” Together with the Department of Lands and Survey, John and Neil turned their vision into a planning document and canvassed the idea around public groups and NGOs in the Auckland area, such as Forest and Bird, the Ornithological Society and tramping clubs.

“From their enthusiastic feedback we realised there was an enormous groundswell of interest in experiencing something actively rather than just seeing it on TV.”

The response from the scientific community was quite different. “Our peers thought it was nonsense,” Neil laughs. “They said replanting native trees would not work, mixing the public with rare birds would not work, and that we should experiment more before doing something so drastic.”

But driven by their vision and carried by a wave of support from the general public, including famous faces like the Kendall sailing family and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) founding chairman Sir Peter Scott, they went ahead. $40,000 of seed funding was raised by the WWF, Lions and Rotary Clubs and topped up by the Government with another $80,000 to replant Tiritiri Matangi Island.

Thirty years on, Tiritiri Matangi has become the open sanctuary John and Neil envisioned. More than 280,000 native trees were raised and planted, covering 60 percent of the once denuded slopes. The thick undergrowth and lush canopies are now home to 37 endemic and native New Zealand species, including Takahe, Little Spotted Kiwi, North Island Robin, Tuatara and, most recently, Wetapunga. Breeding is so successful that Tiritiri is able to supply birds to some of the more than 2,000 conservation projects that have sprung up all over New Zealand, following Tiritiri’s lead. Over 30,000 local and overseas visitors a year take advantage of the regular ferry service to immerse themselves in a slice of New Zealand’s natural beauty, and researchers can use the facilities to stay overnight and study the island’s unique ecosystem. High profile visitors have included the Prime Minister of Norway, a princess from Thailand, HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, Sir David Bellamy, Sir Richard Attenborough, Sir Peter and Lady Scott, and the Rt Hon Helen Clark (who stayed the night).

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“Ongoing research and careful monitoring have been key to Tiritiri’s success and have guided all decisions made over the last 30 years,” John emphasises. Researchers and students from Massey University, Unitec, Auckland and London Zoos and Cambridge University have joined a continuous succession of University of Auckland students and contributed to the more than 117 journal articles written about Tiritiri’s flora and fauna by 2010. “The whole of the island has constantly turned up new questions. That’s what’s been amazing,” says Neil.

He and John remained on the Tiritiri Matangi Island management committee until 1986, organising bird translocations and coordinating volunteer tree planting with the help of the former lighthouse keeper, Ray Walter. When the Department of Conservation (DOC) was formed in 1987 it took over responsibility for the island but the strong community involvement never ceased. The Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi, with over 1,800 members, co-manages the island and is not only responsible for guiding tours, track maintenance, tree planting, fundraising and managing the Tiritiri visitor centre but also funded most of the animal translocations and financially supports ongoing research.

Asked what they believe is Tiritiri’s most important legacy, John, who received the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2013 for his work in conservation, is quick to answer: “It showed that you can create a protected environment for both rare species and people, and that the public is not an interference for scientific research.”

Neil adds: “I like to think it was a turning point in active conservation because it showed you can restore native habitat, which back in the 70s and 80s people thought you couldn’t. Tiritiri’s example mobilised people… all around the country to get involved in restoration projects, and to stop the decline of our native species. To me this is probably one of its real lasting legacies.”

Pictured: Planting Tiritiri Matangi Island. Second from right is Neil Mitchell, right is John Craig. Photo: Tiritiri Archives
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• Acer Aspire S7 Notebook
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• Light Sensing Keyboard, Open flat design
• Gorilla Glass Cover, Smooth & Beautiful
• Instant on, Instant Connect
• Ultra Thin, Ultra Light

To find out more visit www.acer.co.nz or email Business@acer.co.nz to request a free copy of Acer’s Business Buyers guide
In a world first a number of Gore residents welcomed a new type of robot carer into their homes.

"Sneezy will take a bit of getting used to," says John Redmond from Gore, "but I’m getting on a bit now, and he can remind me to take my insulin."

In mid-March John, aged 79 years, was introduced to his healthbot, nick-named “Sneezy”, by Gore Health Chief Executive, Karl Metzler. The introduction was a slow, gentle process with a first visit in early March and more to follow later before Sneezy could take up his duties fulltime.

The little healthbot made a positive first impression. "He’s very good," said John. "It will take me a bit of time to learn how to use him; I’m not as quick-thinking as I used to be. But I’m a diabetic and I’ve had some bad lows. The robot will remind me to take my insulin morning and night, and my other pills too."

John also likes the other functions Sneezy can perform, including the country music he plays and the companionship he provides. "I've lived on my own for a long time, and this will be a big help," he says.

The healthbots, designed to enhance patient care and the lives of older people, use software developed at The University of Auckland. As well as reminding people when and how to take medication, providing entertainment, and calling for help, they also have an easy one-click Skype connection for contacting family, friends or medical staff – and a range of therapy options such as brain gym exercises.

"From a psycho-social point of view, it makes a huge difference," says Karl Metzler. "Over and above improving John’s health status, the intangible aspects [such as reducing isolation] will be more difficult to measure, but very important."

The healthbots speak and use voice recognition to talk to patients. In an emergency – for example if wrong medication was taken – they can text an alert to any nominated phone number.

"The use of healthbots can potentially enable the chronically ill or elderly to stay in their own homes longer," says Karl.

A larger healthbot designed for primary care in general practice will be stationed at Gore Health’s GP services to perform health checks on patients before they visit the doctor. It can check blood pressure, heart rate, and other vital signs, and send the data directly to the doctor’s computer.

Gore Health, the first health provider in New Zealand to take on the healthbots, is an innovative, community-owned, private provider that is developing a centre for rural Health Development in Gore. Assisted with funding from the Gore community and The University of Auckland the centre bought four healthbots to help reduce costs, save staff time and improve long-term health. Two smaller healthbots are also on loan to Gore from the University.

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Suzi Phillips

“...“I gained valuable insight from the course, it has enabled me to foster sustainable, profitable relationships with my clients.” -- Kevin Lin, ANZ
It was, perhaps an unusual move for a 21-year-old law and commerce student, but Chris was trying to find out what he wanted to do with his life.

“The only area of law that I was taken by was international human rights law and international criminal law. It fascinated me that the worst crimes humans perpetrate against each other are those that are the least likely to be prosecuted. I wanted to understand why.”

Chris is now the Deputy Director of The University of Auckland Law Faculty’s New Zealand Centre for Human Rights Law, Policy and Practice. As an undergraduate (at Otago University) he’d become fascinated with Africa, particularly Rwanda and Sierra Leone, but the more he read the more he realised he didn’t know.

A door was opened when he was working during a holiday, painting David Shearer’s house. David had spent several years in various African countries working on human rights so, as Chris helped the current Labour leader renovate his house, he also picked his brains. David Shearer put Chris onto the Campaign for Good Governance in Sierra Leone where he conducted research on access to justice and addressing corruption.

Chris ended up spending a year working in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The experience confirmed his interest in a human rights and international criminal law career, and convinced him to broaden his academic base. “I wanted to develop a multitude of disciplinary tools. I’d studied commerce and law, but I knew that I needed to get a better grasp of anthropology, of international relations, of political science and sociology ...I think that any explanation is always constrained if you are looking at something through a single disciplinary lens.”

He returned to New Zealand at the end of the year, finished his degrees, was accepted to the bar and won a scholarship to do a Masters in African Studies at the University of Oxford. In 2006 he also made the Auckland rugby team. The rugby union was accommodating, allowing him to leave half way through the season to pursue his studies. Over the following years Chris returned to New Zealand during the Oxford University summer holidays to play for Auckland. He recalls finishing his masters before coming back for the rugby season (and then returning to Oxford to start his Ph.D.) “So I sat my exams, raced back here, got in on a Monday, went home, got changed, went to training... and on Friday went to Thailand for Auckland’s pre-season tour.”

He combined his studies with rugby for several years, but the sport took its toll; there were shoulder dislocations, hamstring injuries, a knee injury. In 2010, “I came to the conclusion my body wasn’t up to it.” Professional rugby was, however, “an enabler – it paid for me to do what I really wanted to do”.

Since 2003 Chris has built up expertise in a range of areas, working as a consultant in human rights law, witness protection, transitional justice and the International Criminal Court (ICC). He drafted, for instance, the recommendations on governance for the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In 2008 he directed the Witness Evaluation Legacy Project at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which designed a witness

SEEKING GLOBAL JUSTICE

Chris Mahony was half way through his undergraduate studies when he upped sticks to go and work in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Margo White asked him about his life and work since then.
already been protected by the programme.

In his book, The Justice Sector Afterthought: Witness Protection in Africa (commissioned by the Institute of Security Studies and published in 2010), Chris highlights the witness protection challenges in African nations. Any robust justice system depends on witness participation, but South Africa is the only African country that has an established witness protection programme. And there are significant barriers to the development of such programmes. “Take Kenya for example. They had a Kenyan national Human Rights Commission and a government-commissioned enquiry investigating violence, but the witnesses were getting picked off by the police. So how are you going to protect a witness protection programme that may depend on the police to function?”

It’s not impossible, he says, it just requires a different approach, one that is tailored to the needs and political idiosyncrasies of the nation involved. “My view is that the Kenyan situation instructs that they’re better to start off small and build up, in terms of the sensitivity of the crimes they pursue. Because you have to build the legitimacy and independence of the programme for people to be willing to come forward … my view on Kenya was: Let’s create a robust programme and start out looking at gender-based abuse.

“If you go straight for a Kenyan minister that is engaged in corrupt activity, and who could deploy Kenyan intelligence officers to infiltrate the witness protection programme and kill the witness, no one is going to want to come forward and cooperate.”

As he notes, the international criminal justice system is also vulnerable to manipulation. For his PhD (through the University of Oxford) Chris is looking at the politics of case selection, at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and the ICC. How, in short, the prosecution of individuals – for war crimes, for crimes against humanity – is “instructed by the politics of a shifting global economic order”.

In an article published in the Atlantic Monthly in April last year Chris argued that the conviction of Charles Taylor - the Liberian president convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone - did not represent the triumph of international justice that many claimed - not because Taylor was innocent, but because so many other leaders implicated in similar crimes have not even been indicted. “The truth is that Taylor is an aberration, the exception that proves the rule of a nascent international justice system that is developing in such a way as to reflect global power, not the ideals of global justice.”

As he went on to argue, international courts are still unable to exercise jurisdiction over many of the most powerful criminals. This includes the ICC.

In short, whoever is selected for prosecution depends on the agreement of the ICC and the Security Council. Prosecution is unlikely to proceed if it’s inconvenient to the interests of the superpowers or referring governments. In fact, the ICC is so vulnerable to political and economic interests, he suggests, it could be done away with altogether. An alternative would be what is called “Universal Jurisdiction”. “Which is where you have a law in a country that states anyone who has committed international crimes, such as genocide, torture, crimes against humanity, may be prosecuted if they are on your territory, even if those crimes didn’t happen on your territory.” This would be “less filtered” in terms of who is pursued and who isn’t.

He agrees that trying to ensure that international justice systems exact justice is a somewhat Sisyphean task – it can become a game of cat and mouse, between those who are trying to prosecute and those seeking to avoid prosecution of themselves or their allies.

“But to some extent, sunlight is a disinfectant in the sense that the greater the scrutiny you hold these courts to, the more you ask the difficult questions, the more responsive they become. And one would like to think perhaps they adjust their practices in such a way as to adopt more ethical approaches.

“That’s why I lean toward the academic, to writing about these things. If you don’t look at the sophisticated actors and how they manipulate, they’ll continue to get away with that behaviour. So that’s where I feel I can play a role.”

New Zealand is a long way from the international criminal courts. Asked if this was isolating, he says it can be, but it can also be liberating. “When you’re in amongst it, there’s all sorts of social and professional pressures to adhere to normative explanations. Distance facilitates more independent analysis.

“However, you still have to communicate your ideas to a small group of commentators and practitioners – the University has been extremely supportive in ensuring I have those critical opportunities. It puts The University of Auckland on the map in this field.” He hopes the University can procure funding beyond 2013 to ensure that New Zealand, through the Centre, continues to play this independent role.

International courts are still unable to exercise jurisdiction over many of the most powerful criminals.

Chris (left) with Saleem Vahidy, Chief of Witness Protection, UN Special Court for Sierra Leone.
The Special Collections section of the University Library is now home to the Kate Edger Educational Charitable Trust (KEECT) Memorial Book, which has been nearly 60 years in the making and which was officially handed over to the university librarian, Janet Copsey, at a celebration at University House last December.

Hand-made of vellum parchment and gold-tooled, the large leather-bound book holds within its pages the stories of some extraordinary women, all of whom were members of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Federation of University Women at some period from its beginnings in 1920 until its closure in 2006.

The book was started in 1955 by hand inscribing the educational and public service contributions of deceased members. When the KEECT was established in 2006 it undertook to continue work on the book and its trustees decided to also include in it “living memorials” to such outstanding women as Dame Dorothy Winstone.

Emeritus Professor Charmian O’Connor, chair of the KEECT, told guests that her mother had joined the branch in 1950 when they moved to Auckland, and she recalled the fundraising work that she did, such as helping to make regalia to hire out for graduation ceremonies. “I well remember her cutting out hoods, hand sewing fur onto them and hand-hemming curtains for the refurbished O’Rorke Hall. She was typical of members of that time, well educated and generally not in employment.” The KEECT now oversees the operation of Academic Dress Hire, a highly successful business which funds an expanding programme of awards and scholarships for women and girls in the Auckland area.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Equity, Trudie McNaughton, said that recording the stories was very important, for two reasons, “firstly to acknowledge the taonga left to us and, secondly, to inspire us to set ambitious goals for women, for participation and success for women, in all aspects of society”.

She noted that the book was not only a celebration of individual women and their dreams but of the determination of these women to work together. “That meant their own talents were magnified by others. The women we honour today have accomplished a great deal themselves, and more by working together.”

Jane Bellamy, who co-ordinates and administers the awards funded by the KEECT and is herself featured in the book, read out a few examples of the 59 entries. One she chose was Phyllis Vincent, who was a member for more than 60 years. Phyllis initiated the idea of setting up the academic regalia business, after attending an NZFUW convention in Dunedin. “Phyllis’s enthusiasm for this idea has given many women opportunities with an education that otherwise may never have been realised,” Jane said. It was also Phyllis who mooted the idea of the Memorial Book, to fulfil her wish to acknowledge those who had gone before her.

Among the guests at the celebration event were former branch members and their family and friends, the author of the 13 entries in the Living Memorials section, Dr Michelle Smith, calligrapher Theresa Cashmore, KEECT Trust Manager Sue Marshall, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Engagement) Professor Jenny Dixan.

Pictured: University of Auckland alumna Beryl Green (BA, MA (Hons), CertTchg), on the left at the Clock Tower Building during her masters’ year in 1942 and, on the right, at the event at University House last December, where the Kate Edger Educational Trust Memorial Book, in which she features, was presented to the University Library. Beryl Green (nee Hobbis) was an English teacher, rising to become Deputy Principal of Epsom Girls’ Grammar School in 1986, a mother of four children, including Professor Louise Nicholson from the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, and a “ stalwart” member of the Federation of University Women. She is described in the Memorial Book as having a passion for people and education. “The Federation gave her the friendship and fellowship of scholarly women, and helped to direct Beryl’s passions while fulfilling the aims of the organisation.”

LIVES OF EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN CELEBRATED

Success for women, in all aspects of society
In 1999 when I first began researching Ralph Hotere’s work as an undergraduate at Auckland the intensity of his black paintings seemed overwhelming. Where do you begin with a work that is entirely black? Certainly in this case not with the artist. Ralph was famous for not speaking about his own work. Even though there are often words in the paintings they are never his words – but rather the words of friends who are poets or waiata transcribed by his father. He has always remained silent on the subject of his paintings. It wasn’t that he was not articulate, he was. He was also very funny and was known to deliberately mislead unsuspecting students not yet attuned to his humour. But there were many times over subsequent years during the course of writing first a masters and then a doctoral thesis that I wished I had chosen to write on an artist who would at least offer some comment for me to respond to.

During the course of cataloguing Ralph’s own collection, in his home and his studio at Carey’s Bay, I discovered his figure drawings – a group of works that I found quite startling as they were so distinctly different from his paintings. These works were of course well known by many people, particularly in Dunedin and Carey’s Bay, because he had often gifted them to friends or in exchange for some service like having his car repaired. Whereas Ralph’s paintings were carefully considered, requiring many intense hours of work, the figure drawings were produced in a few moments with whatever was to hand; a biro or pencil and a loose sheet of paper. They are little more than a few spontaneous flourishes of line defining the curve of a hip or shoulder, or a sweep of hair – beautiful, calligraphic gestures, drawn intuitively and for pleasure. They were often of women he loved: friends, girlfriends, wives and also dancers. There were, at the time I was cataloguing his collection, drawings in almost every room. We gathered many of these together alongside drawings from other collections for an exhibition that was shown first at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery and which then toured the country, including The University of Auckland’s Gus Fisher Gallery. From that exhibition was developed a book published by Auckland University Press in 2005 (The Desire of the Line: Ralph Hotere Figurative Works).

In 2006 I began a series of formal interviews with Ralph for a book being published by Ron Sang. I had known him for some time by now and although he was always gracious and kind I was worried that again I would come away with very little indication of whether what I thought coincided in any way with his painterly intentions. During the course of those interviews, however, I found an approach that worked. If I proposed a line of questioning that he thought was too fanciful he would simply turn his head away and look out the window, but if I was close he would say something like “could be” and if he liked what I said he would smile and at times become quite emotional. One of the series we spoke about in those interviews were the Lo Negro Sobre Lo Oro paintings (The Black Over the Gold). When I suggested they were the most Catholic of his works he was for a moment overwhelmed with emotion. My sense of that conversation was that these works took him back to his childhood spent in a large, devoutly Catholic family and the flickering candlelight of the mass.

The last writing I did on his work focused on the Godwit/Kuaka mural in the Auckland Art gallery. The multitude of thin coloured lines in this work are like a barcode drawn from a rainbow. I had been reading about synaesthesia at that time and had often wondered whether Ralph saw colour as sound. When I asked him whether his experience of his own work was synaesthetic his face lit up and he said no but he thought that would be wonderful. I realised then how important sound was for him and although he was silent his paintings are never that – from the shouted gestures of red splashed across canvas in the antinuclear works to the lines that vibrate with sound in Godwit/Kuaka and Requiem to the muted keening of his black paintings, like the sound of the karanga or tangi. It had taken me many years of research to realise I did not need to ask him about the paintings, as he had himself pointed out many years before, what he had to say was all there in the works.

**Alumni ACHIEVERS**

**Alumna Danielle McLaughlin (BE Hons 1998)**, after working for some time as an engineering consultant, moved on to study law in the United States, where she is now a member of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Group at Nixon Peabody in Boston. Danielle has just completed a book, with co-author Michael Avery, which charts the extraordinary success of a group of conservative law students who began with an idea at Yale and Chicago Law Schools and created an organisation whose members have reached the highest echelons of law and policy. *The Federalist Society: How Conservatives Took the Law Back from Liberals* shows how conservative ideas about law, some once considered extreme, have made their way into the mainstream of legal thought; it covers substantive areas of the law as diverse as affirmative action, privacy rights, international law, some once considered extreme, have made their way into the mainstream of legal thought; it covers substantive areas of the law as diverse as affirmative action, privacy rights, international and Supreme Court jurisprudence, and property rights. The authors also explore the influence that the society has had on the federal judiciary, addressing such questions as: how did Federalist Society members shape national policy, and the Supreme Court’s direction on civil rights?

**Alumnus Ian Bayly (BSc 1956, MSc 1959)** is on the Adjunct Research Staff of the School of Biological Sciences at Monash University and is working on the micro-crustaceans of Australian grammans. “Gnamma” is an Aboriginal word meaning a rock-hole capable of holding water, and is now also a scientific term widely accepted not only in Australian anthropology, biology and geology, but also internationally. In the winter of 2010, Ian went on an expedition through the Western Australian sector of the Great Victoria Desert collecting micro-crustaceans and insects including mosquitoes from flooded gnammas. Some of the work on this material was recently published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia*. During the years 1957 and 1958, Ian Bayly worked on the zooplankton of Lake Aorotamahine on Mayor Island (Tuhua), Bay of Plenty, as a thesis topic for his Auckland-based MSc (Hons) degree in Zoology. This early interest in microscopic, aquatic animals proved fateful because more than 50 years later Ian is still actively researching micro-crustaceans. Ian has published over 100 scientific papers dealing mainly with the zooplankton of Australian inland waters and estuaries. He has also published extensively on the plankton of the lakes and marine embayments of the Vestfold Hills region of Antarctica which he visited in the 1980s.
A lumnus Samuelu Siilata (BA 2010) wants to bring ancient worlds back to life through the cinematic screen. He talks with Tess Redgrave about his passions and ambitions.

When Samuelu Siilata was growing up in Samoa he had two favourite places – the tropical forest and the main library in the centre of Apia where he would immerse himself in mythology and ancient cultures.

“One day it was the Vikings, the next it was the Ancient Greeks. My dream as a boy was to have my own set of encyclopaedias,” he laughs.

As he grew up Samuelu, now 26, also began to dream about making films that would take his audience to those ancient civilisations. After moving to New Zealand with his family and attending Auckland Grammar, he completed a Bachelor of Arts at The University of Auckland majoring in Film, TV and Media Studies, with minors in Anthropology and History.

“I learnt a lot of theory that helped me understand film, think analytically and construct story lines,” he says of his time at the University.

“And I did some amazing papers on Bollywood, British cinema and the South Seas on screen.”

In 2010 Samuelu received the first Prime Minister’s Pacific Youth Award for Creativity and was offered a paid internship at Weta studios in Wellington.

“I submitted a portfolio of my creative work: art, film, photos and a traditional Maori patu [club] I’d carved while on a course at the University. I think this caught the eye of Weta Founder Sir Richard Taylor.”

Samuelu was placed in the props department for The Hobbit and ended up working for two years through to the end of the film. His team created all the weapons for the orcs, dwarves and elves and he also worked on costuming and in the leather department.

“I helped with armour, hammering rivets, wearing down leather, spray-painting stuff. Weta don’t just make things, they think how something would be used and designed at that time. Everything is supposed to have a story and all the details are carefully thought through.

“We were creating an environment, actual worlds or cultures. You can delve into any space, futuristic or historical, and actually create these worlds to be believable.”

Samuelu finished at Weta late last year and he’s building on that experience and his University degree with two of his own projects: writing an action screenplay based in the Bronze Age, and writing a history of ancient Samoa.

“I want to show and share these worlds that no one has ever seen before.”

This story was first published in issue 12 of Auckland Now
ALUMNI AND FRIENDS
Event calendar highlights
May to November, 2013

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For more information or to ensure you receive an invitation to an event being held in your area please visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/update to update your details.

AUCKLAND Writers & Readers Festival
15-19 May, 2013

The University of Auckland is delighted to again support the Auckland Writers & Readers Festival in 2013, a festival of literature and ideas. The University is able to offer alumni and friends discounted tickets to four sessions, hand-picked by the Alumni Relations Office.

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OFFER

1. THE RULE OF THE WEST IS OVER
   WEDNESDAY DEBATE, 15 MAY, 8.9.30PM
   (Standard ticket price $40, early bird $35, Alumni Offer $32)

2. MR COHEN REVEALED (SYLVIE SIMMONS)
   FRIDAY 17 MAY, 5.30PM-6.30PM
   (Standard ticket price $25, early bird $20, Alumni Offer $18)

3. AN HOUR WITH ANITA DESAI
   SATURDAY 18 MAY, 10-11AM
   (Standard ticket price $25, early bird $20, Alumni offer $18)

4. HONOURED WRITER INITIATIVE: ALBERT WENDT
   SUNDAY 19 MAY, 5.30-6.30PM
   (Standard ticket price $25, early bird $20, Alumni offer $18)

For more information on the authors please visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz

To take advantage of the special alumni ticket price you will need to book through The Edge Box Office.

BY PHONE: 64 9 357 3354 and quote the promotional code ALUMNI.

BY INTERNET: www.buytickets.co.nz. Input ALUMNI into the promotion code box and click the arrow to gain the discount. There will be a $5 transaction fee if booking online.

Royal treatment

University of Auckland Society members and their friends who are supporters of the University and of Summer Shakespeare were invited to a “Royal treatment” reception at University House on 27 March with Executive Producer Alan Smythe. They then attended the fiftieth anniversary performance of King Lear in the University gardens, with Emeritus Professor Michael Neill from the English Department in the title role.

For more information about upcoming events and how to join the Society, visit www.society@auckland.ac.nz

Pictured right: As King Lear divides his kingdom, his youngest daughter, Cordelia (Anthea Hill), is disowned.

Far right: Michael Hurst as the Fool provides a pointed commentary. (Michael was also co-director of the production with renowned Shakespearean actress, Lisa Harrow).
GRADUATION Concerto Gala
9 May, 2013

Alumni and Friends of the University (but especially graduands and their families) are warmly invited to join us at the Graduation Gala: Concerto Competition at the Auckland Town Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday 9 May. The concert will feature School of Music soloists Linda Filimoehala (euphonium), Shauna Isomura (violin) and Lam Wooding (piano) who will compete for a grand prize. They will each perform a concerto piece accompanied by The University of Auckland Symphony Orchestra, conducted by internationally acclaimed musician Professor Uwe Grodd. A special feature of this year’s concert is a performance by the Auckland Chamber Choir conducted by Dr Karen Grylls. For more information on the Gala concert visit www.auckland.ac.nz/gradgala. Admission is free and no tickets are required but please arrive early to secure seats as this is always an extremely popular event.

INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI Network

If you live in or near any of the areas below and would like to be involved with local alumni, we encourage you to make contact with your Volunteer Alumni Coordinator (VAC). If you would like to consider being a VAC for your area, then please contact Jamie Himiona, at j.himiona@auckland.ac.nz for further information.

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Ken also welcomes contact from alumni in Europe without a coordinator in their area.

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CALLING LAW GRADUATES FOR A REUNION IN MAY 2014
Law graduates from 1983-1985, Deborah Hollings Chambers, Philip Skelton, Karol Hadlow, Roger Partridge, Alan Ringwood and David Neutze have formed a committee to organise a reunion of their year groups to reconnect with friends, celebrate successes and remember shared experiences as graduates of The University of Auckland’s Law School. The programme will include Friday night drinks at the Faculty of Law and a reunion dinner with partners on the Saturday.

To ensure you don’t miss out on future important reunion updates visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/update to update your details including your preferred email address.

To express interest in attending and for more information contact Deborah Hollings Chambers phone 64 9 307 8777 or email debchambers@bankside.co.nz

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON 30 JUNE 2013
The awards will be presented at the Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner in March 2014 in Auckland. Up to five awards are presented each year to honour our alumni who have made outstanding contributions through their different achievements to their professions, to their communities and globally. The Young Alumni/alumni of the Year award was introduced in 2006 to recognise alumni 35 years or under who have already demonstrated outstanding achievement in their career.

To download and fill in a nomination form please visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz.
IF YOU WERE TO LIVE HERE...

Linda Tyler writes of the “islands of ideas” within the 5th Auckland Triennial.

Constituting only a moment in the constantly transforming life of the Super City, the 5th Auckland Triennial is an enormous multi-venue art exhibition that will give locals and visitors a chance to see the city anew – perhaps to encounter it like an artist.

In 2013, the fifth iteration of Auckland’s three-yearly art extravaganza turns its attention to the idea of the city of Auckland, for the first time including the University’s staff, students, galleries and curricula.

During the academic year, tides of people surge through the University’s environment constantly, arriving and departing and eddying into new conformations. A population of staff and students nudging 45,000 people constitutes its own city, physically and imaginatively. Curator Hou Hanru’s title for this Triennial is “If you were to live here…” He asks his audience to consider this proposition in relation to installations at the George Fraser and Gus Fisher galleries. The public will also be able to view University students and staff working in The Lab at Auckland Art Gallery. Minds as well as spaces will be occupied with the conjuring of creative ideas.

As well as physically housing some of the exhibits, the University has also been home to some of the exhibitors, including film artist Amie Siegel from America who was an Elam Artist in Residence in 2012 and the Yangjiang Group who will come from China for a fortnight immediately before the Triennial opens.

In consultation with Ngati Whatua, Local Time – an artists’ collective which includes Elam staff Dr Alexandra Monethe and Jonathan Bywater – will provide water from Te Wai Ariki, the freshwater spring at the back of the Law School, for consumption during talks and other public events that will take place during the three months that the Triennial runs.

Associate Professor Peter Robinson’s work will engage staff and visitors to Auckland War Memorial Museum to make “If you were to work here: the mood in the Māori court”. This project involves assigning each member of staff a set of “spirit sticks” (wooden dowels covered in felt coloured red, yellow, green or blue according to the four humours – sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic – of the Hippocratic body) to deploy in the exhibition hall according to how they feel.

Each of the other Triennial projects similarly engages with the fabric of place, turning the searchlight onto its history and memories. Gus Fisher Gallery shares the Kenneth Myers Centre with the School of Music and will exhibit the work of Albanian artist Anri Sala, the French collective Claire Fontaine and Elam graduate Tahí Moore. Free jazz will liven up Shortland Street as saxophone students Callum Passells and Asher Trumpman Lattie wander outside to play their instruments in response to Anri Sala’s film Long Sorrow. Disrupting the staid confines of the domed foyer with its ornate plasterwork will be Tahí Moore’s five flat screens and rickety tower, gesturing to connections between haute couture, surveillance and sound. Atop the façade, Claire Fontaine’s neon sign will announce “Foreigners Everywhere” in Māori, restoring the building’s old broadcasting function, visually at least, to promote te reo.

With 160 spoken languages, New Zealand is now considered a locus for super-diversity, culturally and linguistically. The largest Asian ethnic group comes from a country with a population one thousand times greater than Auckland, China. Installed at the George Fraser Gallery for the month of May will be a construction created by three Chinese men - Zheng Guagu (born 1970, Yangjiang), Chen Zaiyan (born 1971, Yangchun) and Sun Qinglin (born 1974, Yangjiang). Eleven years ago, they decided to name themselves after Yangjiang, the city of 2.5 million on the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong Province where they live: they are the 21st century’s envoys from a new mirror city. During their time on campus prior to the Triennial opening, they will design a structure in which to brew tea as a demonstration of cultural identity.

Down the hill in the Auckland Art Gallery new kiwi design ideas will be tested at The Lab, operated by the School of Architecture and Planning. Engineering by doctoral student Sara Lee with lecturer Mike Davis, this will be a space for building culture by rolling out exhibits and events live, featuring encounters between students of dance, music, architecture, planning and design from AUT and Unitec as well as The University of Auckland. Projects will include Professor Andrew Barrie’s consideration of the potential of the resurrection of churches to heal Christchurch, and proposals for fresh futures for the Whau River in Avondale, Auckland, as imagined by Kathy Waghorn from the School of Architecture and Planning. Working with American architect Teddy Cruz, Doctoral student Sarosh Mulla, founder of the design collective Oh Na Sumo, will shake us awake from the quarter-acre property-owning dream.

Contributing islands of ideas to the archipelago which forms the 5th Auckland Triennial, the University adds heft to the hypothesis "If you were to live here..." and argues that creative intelligence should be shaping objects and experiences, not the other way around.

Linda Tyler

You can learn more by enrolling for the Centre for Continuing Education’s course, Triennial Tours: Insights into contemporary art practice, with tutor Sue Gardiner on five mornings, from Friday 17 May to 14 June 2013, 10.30am to 1pm. The session ID is 103085.
WE ARE THE ROCK
Alumnus and teacher David Riley (MA Hons 1989) was keen to encourage his Pasifika students at Tangaroa College in South Auckland to be proud of who they are. In We Are the Rock, illustrated by Munro Te Whata and published by Little Island Press, David profiles achievers of Niuean ancestry, inspiring his students with stories of sport, music, business, talent, luck and perseverance.

APOLLO IN GEORGE STREET
Apollo in George Street: The Life of David McKee Wright is a lively and scholarly biography of a literary figure who was a leading ballad poet in New Zealand before moving in 1910 to Australia. Though the author, alumnus Michael Sharkey (PhD 1976), describes him as making “crucial contributions” to literary consciousness, David McKee Wright was neglected after his death. Dr Peter Kirkpatrick from the University of Sydney writes that this “splendid biography” helps “rewrite our literary history and the values which inform it”. Michael is himself a renowned poet, whose latest volume, Another Fine Morning in Paradise, was recently published by 5 Islands Press.

WHERE WINE FLOWS LIKE WATER
Subtitled A Gastronomic Pilgrimage Through Spain, this book (recently published in a revised edition) chronicles the sometimes hilarious adventures of alumnus John McAneney (BSc Hons 1972) as he walks 1,000 kilometres with a friend along the pilgrim trail, El Camino, exploring intriguing points of gastronomy and theology. A selection of recipes offers an exotic smorgasbord of the regional cuisines of France and northern Spain and has inspired many readers to walk the pilgrim trail themselves.

HIS OWN STEAM
His Own Steam: The Work of Barry Brickell must be the ultimate literary effort by an alumni team. Barry Brickell is an alumnus (BSc 1961), and the two authors are both alumni: Gregory O’Brien (BA 1984) and Dr David Craig (BA 1985, MA 1990, MLitt 1993). This book, richly illustrated and charting the career of one of New Zealand’s most important ceramicists, is published by Auckland University Press in association with the Dowse Museum. It accompanies a major exhibition which opens at the Dowse in May and will later travel to the University’s Gus Fisher Gallery.

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www.creative.auckland.ac.nz/pgstudy-s2
Growing numbers of students are lining up to take part in the exciting and challenging learning experience of designing, building, testing, and racing formula race cars, all in the space of 12 months.

Alumnus Brent Tucker had never heard of the American competition known as Formula SAE until he saw a presentation in 2003 by a group of fellow engineering students who had read about the competition and were keen to start a team.

Having heard them talk about it he was just as keen as they were, and became a member of the first-ever University of Auckland SAE team. His enthusiasm and support has continued in his professional life, where he is now a production manager with River Carbon, a platinum sponsor of the team.

"A number of staff weren't sold on the concept initially and thought it couldn't be done in a year, especially when it would be solely run by students, which is one of the rules of the competition," says Brent.

However, Professor Debes Bhattacharyya, then head of Mechanical Engineering, saw merit in the idea and provided summer studentships for three students to assess its feasibility. The trio set up a team structure and a constitution, began work on a basic design, and started organising sponsorship. By the end of the break, the team comprised 30 students.

At the end of that year, they competed in the Australasian competition, Formula SAE-Australasia, finishing sixth out of 20 teams – a rare feat since few teams manage to race in their first year of the competition.

"We're always keen to have students from across the University get involved, and we've had a few business students sign up, but most are from Engineering and within that group, the majority will come from mechanical engineering," says Holly Woulfe, the team's business manager.

Now in her fifth and final year of an Engineering and Arts conjoint degree, Holly's been involved with the SAE team since her first year, including a stint as the Team Leader in 2010.

"It was a bit strange, having this fresh-faced 19-year-old in charge of about 40 or so men," laughs Holly. "It was one of the most stressful years of my life, but I learnt so much, and the whole experience forced me to become a better, more confident person."

Holly's leadership and experience over the past four years have no doubt been invaluable, in a team that changes each year as students complete their degrees or, as is sometimes the case, come to realise the amount of commitment required.

This year, to ensure continuity in administration, Holly has moved to the business team, looking to get things streamlined for next year and continue the team's positive relationship with its 130 sponsors.

While the team has yet to finish in the top three (though there was a fourth place finish in 2011) it has earned a reputation for excellent engineering practice. Since 2008, it has placed within the top three for the design aspect of the competition, which suggests a top-three finish overall is not too far away.

"One of the goals we decided on at the start of the year, before we even thought about designing our car, is to win the 2013 Formula SAE-Australasia event," says 2013 team leader Matthew Greenslade. "To do that, we need to have the right team and the right culture. It's something the top SAE judges around the world often bring up – you must have an A-team before you can have an A-car."

While it is essential to look after the finances, keeping within budget and maintaining current sponsors, there is also a need to ensure the competition remains an enriching learning experience and to keep knowledge transferring to incoming members.

This includes having an active alumni of "old boys" (and girls), who are often on hand to critique and challenge, but the team is also able to get advice from staff, so long as it is only advice and not assistance with building or design.

"I think the whole experience is fantastic for students. They are exposed to all aspects of an engineering project, including management, design, build and marketing," says Professional Teaching Fellow Stephen Elder, who has been a faculty adviser to the team since 2005.

"I couldn't imagine not being involved."

Chris Marshall

Pictured: Holly Woulfe

"You must have an A-team before you have an A-car."
Team Dynamics Profiler

A ‘results focused’ and ‘evidence based’ online enterprise system enabling executives to individually and collectively drive organisation-wide performance.

Everybody knows that people are the core of any organisation, particularly where technology, knowledge and customers are concerned. This reality has driven a myriad of leadership books on display at airport bookshelves, personality profilers, 360° feedback instruments, leadership coaches, training workshops, leadership programmes, and guru presenters - the ilk of Steven Covey and Tony Robbins.

Millions of dollars are spent globally each year by corporate and government sector organisations with the goal of stepping up competent functional managers to inspiring strategic leaders. Despite these large investments and best intentions, the question remains; “what online tool is available that leaders can use to: (i) understand the members of their teams and their preferences?; (ii) identify the roles each team member is best suited to?; and (iii) provide evidence that their teams are working effectively and driving performance and results?”

The first cab off the rank on this new online results focused, evidence-based leaders’ toolkit market is the ISL Team Dynamic Profiler™. This Cloud enabled profiler is the brain child of the Institute for Strategic Leadership. Founded in New Zealand in 1999, the Institute now has offices in London, Singapore, Sydney as well as in Auckland. With over 1,700 alumni (including a former chief executive of Fonterra, a Deputy Prime Minister, a Governor General and several university Vice-Chancellors), ISL is well positioned to understand the needs of leaders and the gaps in the executive development market.

Recognisable by its iconic logo representing the four generic personality characters (Red, Yellow, Green and Blue), the ISL Team Dynamic Profiler™ integrates and personalises in-depth information from the MBTI™ (“ Wired-up”) and FIRO-B™ (”Work-with”) both individually and collectively so they understand each others’ needs, styles and preferences and work together effectively one-on-one and as a high performing team.

Specific information available includes:

- What are John’s innate gifts, blind spots and stressors?
- How does John prefer to be informed and convinced?
- What will you notice about John in a team?
- How are John’s colleagues wired-up and what are their preferences?
- What are John’s contributions and styles (and those of his colleagues) in terms of: leadership, culture, innovation, change, problem solving & conflict resolution, and stress management?
- Where are the pressure and ignition points in John’s team?
- How best to develop John and each of the team members, individually and as collectively?

According to the GM People and Performance of a major NZ retailer “Every time we get together for a quarterly team “away-day” we use the Team Dynamic Profiler web app. We do a ‘round’ getting each team member to read their profiles, and indicate how they are tracking. The app provides us with a framework for our leaders to clarify their styles, increase their self awareness, and recognise the impact they are having on others – ‘who I am’, ‘what I do’, and ‘how I lead’. In particular, each of us considers how our ‘type’ and ‘team dynamics’ are impacting on the Seven Empowering Forces of the Team Leadership Model that drives the profiler’s Team 360°.”

The ISL Team Dynamic Profiler™ is accompanied by a series of profiling, team building and business performance coaching workshops. An optional “train-the-trainer” accreditation process enables larger clients to roll the team dynamic profiler toolkit throughout the organisation with a results focused orientation.

Geoff Lorigan, the ISL founder and director (a former professor and alumnus of the University of Auckland) indicates “we already have a major firm each side of the Tasman using this new online leadership tool and based on the impact it is having on their people and company results, we anticipate the TDP to evolve into a serious ‘enterprise system that drives organisation-wide results’, and much more than just another personality tool.”
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