Kia or koutou

Welcome to this update on the Science in society research theme.

As geographers, Karen and I are constantly dealing with the challenges generated by the cultural separation of science and society. As a physical scientist, my research emphasises the natural processes which affect human life, while Karen’s research reflects more closely the importance of cultural aspects of human life and their interactions with the natural environment. However, we both advocate for a new (but unknown) way of seeing human–environment (science and society) interactions and approaches that emphasise the connectedness between science and the societal context within which they were created.

We are supported by a **Steering Group** of social and physical scientists from across the Faculty and a Research Programme Manager, Kathryn Howard. Many thanks to our current members: Brendon Blue, Carmen Astudillo Garcia, Craig Sutherland, David Krofcheck, JC Gaillard, Leane Makey, Marie McEntee and Rizwan Asghar.

We have prepared an **Annual Plan** listing the objectives and activities we wish to undertake this year. We want to:

- Promote research that challenges the current model of scientific research and its underlying assumptions;
- Foster dialogue within and between communities and scientists;
- Ensure the role of Māori as Treaty partners is recognised in the science we do;
- Provide opportunities to think in new ways about the relationship between science and societies in an era of community-driven initiatives;
- Grow a diverse and inclusive community of researchers across the Faculty from undergraduate to professorial levels.

$10,000 of **seed funding** is available to nurture and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration among researchers within our research theme.

The first project we are recommending to fund is a Science Shop Feasibility Study led by Marie McEntee. A Science Shop, embedded in a University, enables community groups to obtain independent research support to address a societal problem at low/no cost. They help to increase societal awareness of, and access to, science. This project investigates the feasibility of establishing a Science Shop at Auckland University, the first in NZ.

If you have a small six-month project that would benefit from $1,000 to $5,000 of seed funding, please contact Karen or myself.
We are progressing other initiatives discussed at our launch meeting at the end of last year including the “Ask a Scientist” videos and the “Speakers Corner” concept. We are also starting to plan a week of theme related activities during lunchtimes in Semester 2. Please contact us if you would like to help with the organisation, can recommend a thought-provoking speaker or have access to interactive science exhibits/apps etc. that would encourage student and staff engagement with our theme.

**Webpages** are being developed for all the Faculty of Science research themes. Look out for updates here. You can also register your interest in any of the themes via this link or directly for the Science in society research theme [here](#).

As co-leaders of the Science in society research theme, we welcome your support and engagement with society to inform, mitigate and contribute to significant societal challenges.

Karen Fisher and Jennifer Salmond