



Tāmaki Update

March 2016

A newsletter for
Tāmaki Innovation
Campus

The TONGAN way



Dr Malakai Ofanoa is working to provide Tongan communities living in urban areas with positive ways to address health and well-being issues.

How to best help our Pacific Island population is a question that has long exercised Malakai Ofanoa, but he's taking heart from the apt acronym TONGAN.

Dr Ofanoa is a lecturer in Pacific Health at the School of Population Health, and his PhD thesis completed in 2010 at Tāmaki, spawned the framework of a now-working model to address Pacific health issues. He sought to adapt a well-proven New Zealand community development/health promotion model to use with Tongans living in urban areas, giving them positive ways to address health and well-being issues.

TONGAN, piloted in Mangere's Tongan community, means Talking, Organisation, Needs Assessment, Goal Setting, Action and Negotiated Evaluation. These steps are the

framework for an approach to setting up and running empowerment-based community projects, where the community itself is in control.

Dr Ofanoa says the possibility that this model might work with Tongans was especially interesting since its philosophy of empowerment and self-determination was different from the background of many Tongans.

Philosophically it matches a generic use of empowerment as one initiative to improve health and welfare, but the Tongan community, with its frequent lower incomes and poor employment history, has found the bottom-up TONGAN approach more acceptable to their needs.

"Through 'talking' (Talanga) we use

dialogue to identify the real needs, and then work directly to achieve each step through a set of carefully prescribed stages," he says. "It's an approach that can adapt to other Pacific Island communities with their very diverse cultures in other parts of New Zealand and perhaps also for other Pacific and migrant groups both in New Zealand and elsewhere."

Dr Ofanoa said the health issues facing Pacific Island nations meant non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, stroke and heart disease were a priority, with the population's high propensity for risk factors. To get to the crux of the matter, he says it is important to understand what would motivate a community to address their own health matters on an on-going basis.

The TONGAN model trial had to first find a home, eventually building a centre for the resources and workers that meet community needs. Now well established, he says the centre is working well with considerable community input.

Dr Ofanoa is part of the Pacific Health staff within the School of Population Health and is working on expanding the group's services. Currently they cover teaching for undergraduate and postgraduate study, and research in public health areas as well as community engagement.

The group was invited to visit the Otago Medical School and other places in the Pacific Region as part of a growing collaboration and hopes a reciprocal visit will add to the base knowledge of Pacific Island issues within the healthcare system.



Message from Head of Tāmaki Innovation Campus

Dear Colleagues

The Tāmaki Update is our flagship of “business as usual”. The first issue of the newsletter for 2016 provides a snapshot of a few of Tāmaki’s many and varied campus activities that contribute to our enriched academic and professional environment.

Congratulations to Professor Suzanne Purdy and her team representing the Centre for Brain Research for the success of Brain Day held at Tāmaki Innovation Campus for the first time this year. Your Amazing Brain: An Interactive Expo received much praise from all those attending. Adult visitors had the opportunity to hear from academics involved in the latest cutting-edge research, and were given tours of the Clinics and the Exercise Sciences labs. Kids had their faces painted with brain cells and took part in interactive displays - there was also a bouncy castle and Brain Fun with Suzy Cato. The community groups welcomed the opportunity to network with members, fellow charities, academics and the public. It is very important to see events such as this raising awareness of brain disorders and the work that the University of Auckland is involved in. Distinguished Professor Richard Faull’s vision for the Centre for Brain Research, linking scientists, clinicians and the community is epitomised in “Brain Day”. Thank you to all those involved - we were extremely pleased to host you at the Tāmaki Innovation Campus!



Congratulations are also in order for Tim Tenbenschel and Jim Stinear who have both been promoted to Associate Professor. Tim Tenbenschel is involved in health policy and public management research and is the Head of Section for Health Systems at the School of Population Health. Find out more about his academic journey and his aspirations for the future in this issue of the Tāmaki Update. Jim Stinear is based in the Department of Exercise Sciences and his research includes the development of novel therapies that combine repetitive limb movement and non-invasive magnetic and electrical brain stimulation to induce beneficial neuroplasticity following brain injury and stroke. Associate Professor Stinear is Chair of the department’s Clinic Committee and is Chair of the new allied health professional organisation Clinical Exercise Physiology New Zealand.

Don’t forget to diary upcoming Head of Campus Seminar Series speakers and networking events! We are pleased to be able to confirm that Dr Hilary Blacklock will be speaking on 6 May. Dr Blacklock is a Haematologist at Middlemore Hospital, Medical Director of the New Zealand Bone Marrow Donor Registry, and Member of the Board of Trustees for the Leukaemia and Blood Cancer Foundation. Also confirmed is Professor Helen Sword, Director of the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education who will be speaking on 22 July. We look forward to both these presentations and I’m sure they will of great interest to all.

Best wishes

Associate Professor Greg Anson

Head of Tāmaki Innovation Campus

What’s been happening?

Obesity debate and sugary drinks*



Soft drink companies see the obesity debate as the biggest threat to their products, according to leading nutrition commentator Professor Marion Nestle from New York University, who spoke at Tāmaki recently. She told the audience that the trend in America shows a reduction in consumption of fizzy drinks between the 1990s and 2000s. “This trend is of great concern to the soda industry. As early as 2007, Coca-Cola executives were already saying that ‘The Achilles Heel of the soda industry is the discussion about obesity.’” Obesity is a huge global issue now and the soda industry is concerned this may further reduce demand for some of their products.

ACC Minister visits Simulation Centre*



Treatment injury prevention in New Zealand will benefit from a world leading operating room simulation training programme, developed and piloted at the University of Auckland and to be rolled out to hospitals from this year, and funded by ACC. ACC Minister, Nikki Kaye visited the Simulation Centre for Patient Safety at the Tāmaki Campus in December and discussed the advantages of multi-disciplinary operating room simulation training with Professor Ian Civil and Associate Professor Jennifer Weller. “It’s exciting to be able to rollout this nationally significant simulation training to multi-disciplinary teams, using this cutting edge technology,” Ms Kaye says.



Hot contest for places in clinical psychology training



Psychology Clinic Director, Nigel George, with Sean McArdle (right) who is one of eleven second year doctoral trainees to have a placement at the Clinic this year.

It's business as usual for the time being, at the University of Auckland Clinic's Psychology Services. Psychology, a long-time resident at Tāmaki Campus, will re-join the main psychology department on the City Campus in the new Science building later this year.

It's a move Clinic Director Nigel George hails as exciting. The move will bring a change for the clinic which began on Campus a decade ago, to ensure amongst other things, sufficient top quality placement for students. Part of its role as a teaching clinic is to provide student psychologists with the best possible learning environment.

The eleven successful doctoral level students undertake three placements throughout the course, with 200 hours spent in each placement over a two year period. Areas covered in these placements include adult mental health, child and family, forensics, as well as the Psychology Clinic. A further year's internship in a DHB finishes off the training programme.

Overall, Nigel says, the clinic hopes to demonstrate what clinical psychology should look and be like in the wider community context. While the clinic covers greater Auckland, many referrals come from maternal mental health at Green Lane, particularly for clients whose needs are for longer intervention for post-natal issues. Part

of its attraction is that mothers may bring children or babies along, creating a casual, rather than strictly clinical atmosphere; helped also by easy and available parking.

For Nigel and colleagues, the highlights have been many over the years, but he says a major joy has been the individual rhythm and achievements brought about by each semester. "For the first 3-4 weeks, it's a bit of a struggle for everyone - clients and trainees - but by about week six or so, the whole thing is humming, from the people coming in, to the therapists. That's the essence of what we do - to see everyone in the clinic grow and develop."

Their work includes a range of empirically supported therapies from Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy which includes the widely-practiced mindfulness, through to the next wave of compassion-focussed therapies.

Psychology is the victim of its own success, becoming one of the most popular courses in the University; a popularity due mainly through a high profile on TV and in magazines. He calls it the 'recession-proof degree', with the flexibility to change focus across careers and countries - the ultimate adaptable degree. More than 100 applicants vie for the eleven placements at Tāmaki each year.

In brief

Coming up - Head of Campus Seminar Series

6 May, 3.30-4.30pm, 731.201

Dr Hilary Blacklock, Haematologist, Middlemore Hospital



Dr Blacklock is Medical Director of the New Zealand Bone Marrow Donor Registry and a Member of the Board of Trustees for the Leukaemia and Blood Cancer Foundation. She is

actively involved in clinical care, teaching and clinical research with > 70 published papers.

App makes low salt and gluten-free shopping easy*

Low salt and gluten-free food products will be easy to identify using an updated smartphone app that helps New Zealanders to shop healthy. The revised app enables shoppers to look out for hidden salt in products when they are grocery shopping thanks to a new filter - SaltSwitch. People with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance can also assess gluten content when food shopping with the addition of GlutenSwitch to New Zealander's leading food label-scanning app, FoodSwitch, which was tailored for New Zealand shoppers by the nutrition team at NIHI.

Dads can help boost child immunisations

Aiming pro-immunisation campaigns at fathers-to-be could be a promising new approach to get more New Zealand children immunised on time, according to new research by the Growing Up in New Zealand study. The paper published in the journal, Vaccine showed that a child whose father made the decision during pregnancy - that his child would be fully immunised - was three times more likely to be immunised on time than the child of a future dad who had decided on partial or no immunisation, independent of the mother's intentions.



Cycling's vicious circle can be turned around



Dr Sandar TinTin was inspired to specialise in the area of public health when working as a medical resident and realising that treating individual patients did not deal with the root of the problem.

Cyclist vs car is a frequent headline in the media, and cycling's travel, injury risk and conspicuity was the content of Sandar TinTin's doctoral research.

She grew up in a Myanmar city where cycling was common, learning to ride at seven, and cycling on the road without adult accompaniment at ten. Cycling to school and other day-to-day activities, she enjoyed freedom and independent mobility and avoided serious injury despite not using helmets or high visibility materials (neither expected nor commonly used).

But increased traffic in a bigger city, with a more complex transport environment, halted her cycling as she pursued her medical studies.

She moved to New Zealand to undertake a Master of Public Health, noting few cyclists on Auckland roads. Initially she thought it signalled a developed nation, but realised her misconception on visiting Europe and noting the popularity of cycling.

"This stimulated my interest in investigating the epidemiology of bicycle travel and associated injury risk in the New Zealand context. I chose this for my doctoral thesis when I was appointed to the Taupo Bicycle Study, a large prospective cohort study of cyclists. This was also in line with my interest in epidemiological research

and desire to expand my knowledge in epidemiological analyses," says Sandar.

The context was that cycling is an efficient mode of transport in terms of time, space and money, and improves social cohesion and transport equity; increasing physical activity, improving health and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but safety concerns, particularly related to traffic danger, limit cycling.

While not involved in the initial recruitment phase of the Taupo Bicycle study in 2006, she gained a project grant from the Health Research Council in 2009 to undertake follow-up activities.

"Like many other PhD students, I faced challenges," she says. "However, I appreciated the consistent support and insightful guidance from my supervisors, Professors Alistair Woodward and Shanthi Ameratunga."

As a result, Sandar was one of two New Zealand-based PhD students invited by the Royal Society to present the findings at the first Commonwealth Science Conference in Bangalore, India in 2014.

Her main findings were as expected, with the prevalence of bicycle commuting low in New Zealand and in decline between 1986 and 2006 (but with signs of recovery more recently). The rate of bicycle crash injuries per time spent travelling was relatively high,

compared to other road user categories. There were regional differences in travel patterns and injury risks, which suggested the existence of the "risk in scarcity" effect for New Zealand cyclists, ie cycling is more dangerous if fewer people do it.

New Zealand had been caught in a vicious circle, with a lower proportion of cyclists on the road decreasing their conspicuity and posing a higher crash risk, which in turn discouraged bicycle use.

Turning this vicious circle to a virtuous one requires cooperative and multi-disciplinary efforts, and she sees opportunities for environmental changes to reduce collision crashes. Such as, self-explaining roads that lower speeds and attract pedestrians and cyclists, well-designed cycle lanes and segregated cycle paths, and intersection treatments that minimise conflicts between vehicles and vulnerable road users.

These supportive measures, if implemented alongside policies to restrict car use (congestion charges, reduced car parking and car free zones), are likely to promote a modal shift and create a better balanced transport system.

Post PhD, Sandar has joined the Cancer Epidemiology research, investigating the prevalence, demographic profiles and clinical outcomes of genetically-defined subtypes of lung cancer and accessibility of genetic testing and targeted therapy in a large nationwide cohort of lung cancer patients in New Zealand. The project is led by Professor Mark McKeage from Clinical Pharmacology, and Sandar and Professor Mark Elwood are providing epidemiological inputs.

Sandar has been awarded the AMRF Perpetual Guardian David and Cassie Anderson Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on this project. She is also involved in two breast cancer projects from the Waikato Clinical School and is working with Dr Susan Bigby from the Middlemore Hospital for an endometrial cancer project.

And, after a cycling childhood, does she cycle in New Zealand? No.



Brain Day huge success

There was something for everyone, with activities for all ages at this year's Brain Day held at the Tāmaki Innovation Campus. An interactive expo, the event was organised by the Centre for Brain Research in association with the Neurological Foundation of NZ. There were activities for kids and lectures on brain-related research. A highlight of the day, and receiving a standing ovation, was the emotion-filled performance by the CeleBRation Choir and children from Ellerslie School.



LtR Prof Richard Faull, Sir Graeme Douglas, Lady Ngaire and Prof Suzanna Purdy



Kids Brain Zone



Kids Brain Zone



CeleBRation Choir and Ellerslie School

New online tool supports healthy food in schools*

Schools will soon have a new online tool to assess and improve the food and beverages they have available for students.

The new online tool will enable schools to self-review the healthiness of the food and beverages they have available and support them in improving their food environments.

The launch of the new School Food Environment Review and Support Tool (School-FERST) coincided with International School Meals Day on 3 March.

The tool was developed by the INFORMAS team based in the School of Population Health and is designed to enable schools to assess and continue to contribute positively to their food environments by capturing important indicators and best practice examples.

These include foods and beverages provided and sold on the school premises, use of school gardens, participation in food and nutrition programmes and the school's food and nutrition policy.

School-FERST will also highlight the efforts of schools that are taking positive steps to improve their food and nutrition environments and promote them as role models.

It will enable schools to better link their nutrition education curriculum to mirror the food and beverages offered.

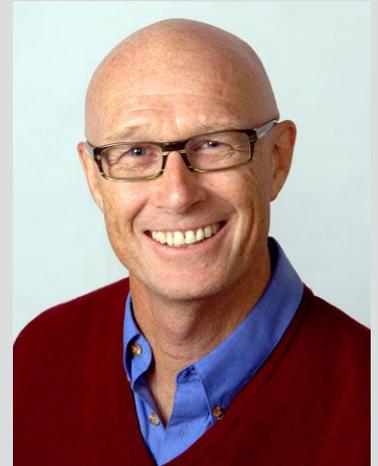
"The data gathered using School-FERST will provide an important snapshot of food and nutrition environments in schools in Aotearoa," says INFORMAS Co-ordinator, Professor Boyd Swinburn. "It's vital we act now to better understand and improve the food environments of our children."

Lisa King and Chef Michael Meredith, founders of 'Eat My Lunch', which provides lunch to kiwi kids in need, are also supportive of School-FERST. 'Eat My Lunch' is based on the principle that every child deserves a healthy and nutritious meal at lunch time.

"We all know that kids struggle to concentrate and learn on an empty stomach so in order for them to succeed our lunches focus on a wholesome lunch with less sugar and more veggies - nothing from a packet," says Ms King.

The Ministry of Health, supports the use of School-FERST by schools.

*Source: Medical and Health Media Advisor, Suzi Phillips



"Many Kiwi children consume one or two of their daily meals at school, so the school food environment is the key to establishing healthy eating patterns from a young age," says Boyd Swinburn.



Collaborative work provides intellectual horsepower for large health research projects



Dr Tim Tenbensen's promotion to Associate Professor signals his long term commitment to the University and also consolidates his international collaborations and work.

From a self-confessed 'stumble' into healthcare, Dr Tim Tenbensen is doing rather well.

He teaches and researches health policy, and has been head of the Health Systems section in the School of Population Health at the University of Auckland since 2011; starting with Political Studies at the Faculty of Arts in 1997, before moving to Tāmaki in 2005.

Newly promoted as Associate Professor, Tim Tenbensen is looking to continue his research into health policy and public management.

However, he admits he moved into health policy almost by accident in the nineties, after leaving Griffith University where he had been researching and teaching public policy. "I knew I needed to develop a research profile,

and I was looking at a government agency proposal for setting priorities in healthcare services which seemed fundamentally flawed, so that's what got me interested in the area," he says.

The environment of health policy has suited him and he's delved deeply into the New Zealand health system and policy for the past 18 years. One work highlight has been the supervision of PhD projects examining implementation of government targets in areas such as emergency department waiting times and child immunisation.

International collaboration has also been a highlight, particularly working with colleagues in Canada on the integration of health services, and comparison between New Zealand and Denmark's governance of primary care. He is currently one of 'a cast of

thousands' working on a large Canadian-New Zealand project, called iCoach (Integrated Care for Older Adults with Complex Health Needs), led by Assoc Professor Tim Kenealy.

Dr Tenbensen is also engaged in developing theoretical frameworks for understanding health policy and implementation, with a particular focus on relationships of accountability and collaboration between health sector organisations. "Recently I've become really interested in how health services are a complex system, and how large or small changes in one area may have unexpected positive and negative impacts on other parts of the system."

He has recently spent five months on study leave in Canada and Denmark, returning with the contention that we are indeed doing something right as a country with our healthcare system.

"We're doing some things here in New Zealand that other countries just talk about and hope to do. Where others really regard us as a leader is in our population based funding, our primary healthcare infrastructure. While New Zealand has not achieved everything it has hoped to, it is further along the road to a better, more integrated health system than most countries."

Dr Tenbensen's promotion signals his long term commitment to the University and also consolidates his international collaborations and work. The trick, he says, will be to find a true work-life balance which he believes to be critical in maintaining professional output.

One thing that helps him to achieve that balance is his long term involvement in the Jubilation gospel choir. The 33-strong vocal super group sings soul, blues and country-infused gospel at gigs around the country, from WOMAD to Arrowtown.