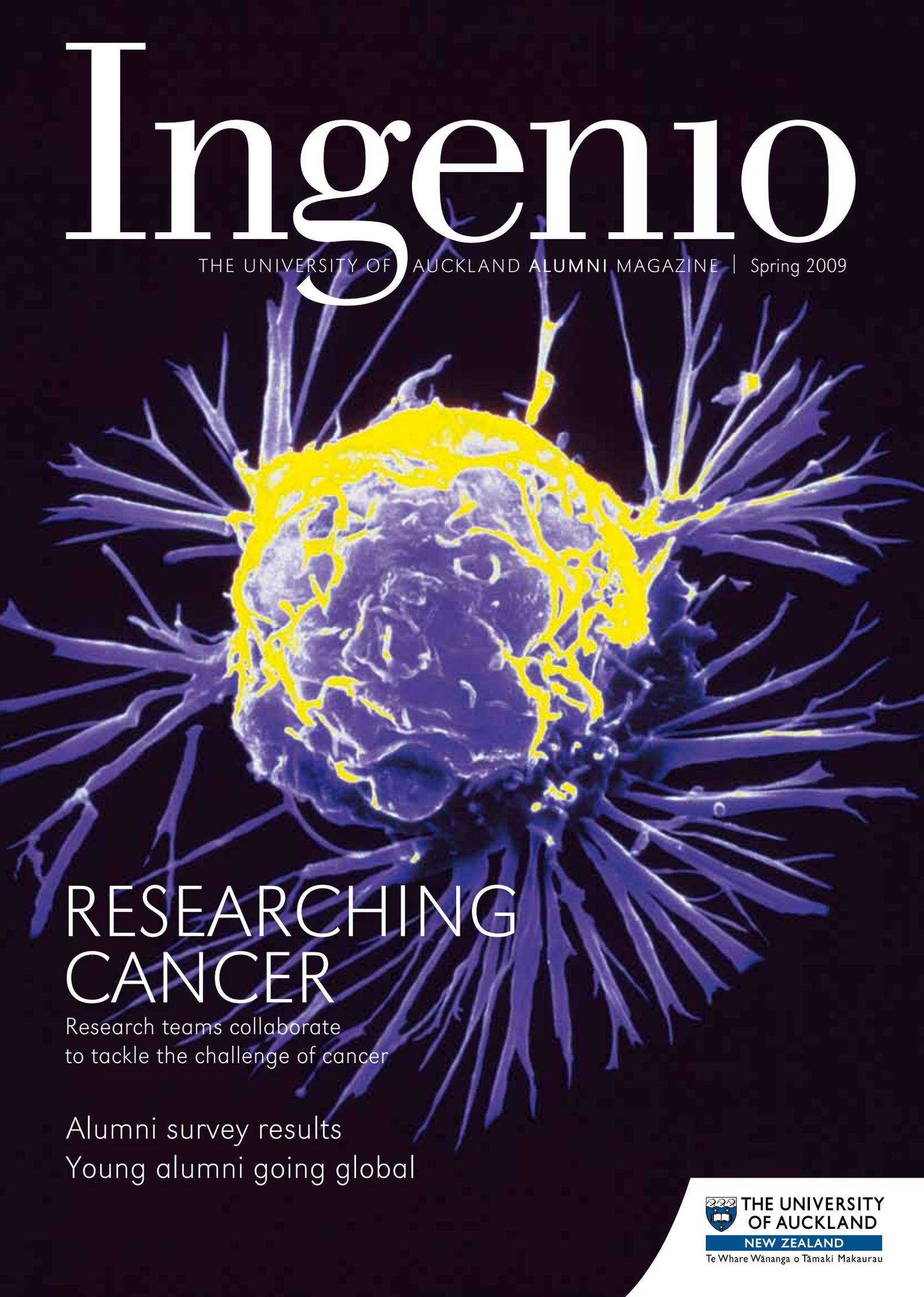


# Ingenio

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND ALUMNI MAGAZINE | Spring 2009



## RESEARCHING CANCER

Research teams collaborate  
to tackle the challenge of cancer

Alumni survey results  
Young alumni going global

# In this issue

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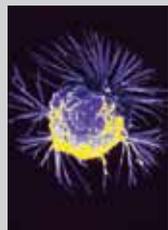
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### Cover photo

False-colour scanning electron micrograph (SEM) of a single breast cancer cell, showing its uneven surface and cytoplasmic projections. From the Science Photo Library.

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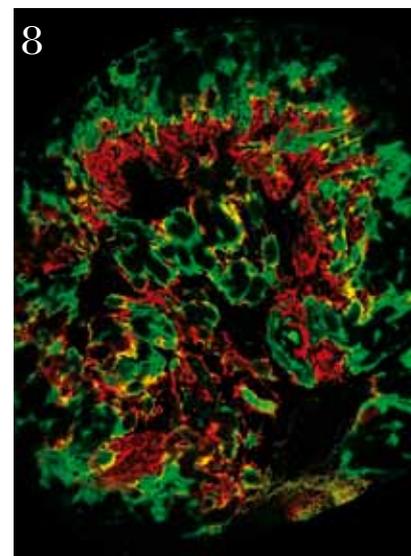
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# From the Vice-Chancellor

## Measuring the value we return to society

After nearly a year in office, the new government is demonstrating a strong desire for greater accountability – in our case, for public institutions such as universities to demonstrate the value they return to society for the taxpayer’s investment in them. This is fair enough, given that the universities collectively spend over a billion dollars a year of public money, and of course we continue to seek ways of reducing costs and improving efficiency, but it is also important to understand what we mean by “value”.

One of the simplest measures of “value for money” is seen in the international rankings of universities – and no country produces as many well ranked universities on such a low level of investment as New Zealand. The University of Auckland, highest ranked among New Zealand’s universities, must therefore surely be one of the best “value for money” propositions in the world.

Another way to look at value is to measure directly the return in investment achieved from the university sector. A recent report from Australia estimated that the real rates of return from investment in university education are at least 15 percent, and from university research in the range of 20 percent or more. These are well above the benchmark rates used to judge good public policy, which are typically 6 to 7 percent. Because of similarities in the Australian and New Zealand systems, it is highly likely that similar rates of return would apply here.

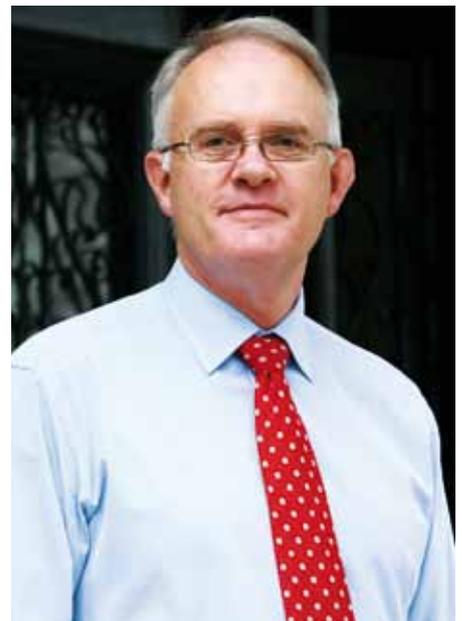
These high rates of return reflect not only the direct impact of expenditure in the community by staff and students, but also the impacts that university education and research have on long-term community well-being. For example, university graduates have up to three-

fold higher salaries, a lower unemployment rate, and better health outcomes than those who do not hold a degree. These are impacts that reverberate through the community, including of course in greater tax takes by governments consequent upon the increased earning power of graduates.

New Zealand universities also compare well with those in other systems in terms of their contribution to economic development. For example, they produce patent applications at a rate on a par with US performance, and are 30 percent more efficient than those in Canada. Per dollar invested, New Zealand universities produce twice as many new companies as the United States and half as many again as Canada.

The market capitalisation of university start-up companies in New Zealand has increased significantly in recent years – from \$159 million in 2004 to \$1.1 billion in 2006. And here, too, The University of Auckland is leading the way – our research company, Auckland UniServices Ltd, is the largest of its kind in Australasia. It has recently helped form the Trans Tasman Commercialisation Fund, a collaboration with Australian universities and an Australian superannuation fund that will give us access to A\$30 million to support the commercialisation of our research.

We also need to remember, though, that universities are not just about economic development. Our researchers contribute widely to the creation of knowledge that benefits our community in many other ways – in improved human health, in helping our children achieve a better education, in enhancing our physical and urban environment, and in the understanding and appreciation of art, language and literature.



What all of this demonstrates, of course, is that universities represent an excellent investment for the nation. It is therefore puzzling that successive governments over the last three decades have, through various policy positions, forced us to operate on ever lower real incomes per student. This is hardly a recipe for enhancing quality, and is in stark contrast to the practices of many governments overseas.

On the other hand, our alumni and friends have increasingly seen the University as something worthy of support. This is reflected not only in the large number of “family” members who engage actively with the institution, but also in the increasing levels of philanthropic support we have received, particularly support for our efforts to attract and retain the very best staff and students. That support will be critical if we are to continue to build a “world-class university in New Zealand”.

STUART McCUTCHEON

PHOTO: DEAN CARRUTHERS

# Letters to the Editor

## Dinosaurs to Mr Darcy

I was greatly interested by the research described in the article "From dinosaurs to Mr Darcy" (Autumn 2009 *Ingenio*, page 13).

The issue to me is not what the ideas of Charles Darwin may or may not have been, and the debate about the evidence for the existence of a "great chain of being" but rather, what was most interesting, is how this research was attempting to bring projects within the disciplines of English, biology and psychology under one technocratic method of analysis. This aims to predict the future by somehow understanding the past.

It is a growing economic factor that public library and community arts organisations are being forced to amalgamate their services to try and cut the cost of delivery. This has meant that teams from disparate, intuitive and technocratic points of view are now being brought together from the library and arts fields to implement the same projects.

In my experience as a full-time employee of the recently-formed Franklin Arts Culture and Library Trust, the real-world results of combined teams of artists and librarians have been mixed. The participants are aware that they need each other to achieve their goals but the air of frustration is palpable.

The idea of "unifying the sciences and the humanities" is a wonderful bonding for your researchers, but these ideas melt away when one is engaged with purely pragmatic decision-making.

Where the ideas which are grown in university research take effect, such as the workplace, people are forced to work together without the benefit of ideological solidarity and decisions are often last-minute, economically constrained and taken without full information.

This is a marriage of convenience rather than a romantic honeymoon.

**Joshua Russell**  
(BA 1998, MA 2000, MLitt 2003)

The link between the articles on Charles Darwin ("From dinosaurs to Mr Darcy") and Dr Andrew Sinclair ("A case of mistaken identity?") in your Autumn issue is interesting. Captain Robert Fitzroy was captain of the *HMS Beagle* when Darwin joined the ship as a naturalist in 1831. In 1843 Fitzroy was appointed Governor of New Zealand and he met Dr Sinclair in Sydney. They became friends and he made Sinclair Colonial Secretary. Judy Wilford opens her article with

the question "Think of Charles Darwin and what leaps to mind?" Immediately I think of the early chapters of his book, *The Voyage of the Beagle* and his very modest account of how he left the ship at Bahia Blanca in Patagonia and travelled on horseback some 500 miles to rejoin her at Buenos Aires. He was accompanied by a party of gauchos and they slept under the stars with saddles for pillows.

The usual picture of a very sedate Darwin with a long beard does not do justice to the young naturalist who spent nearly three months in the company of the world's finest horsemen.

**Brian Prendergast (DIPOBST 1971)**

Judy Wilford in her intriguing article "From dinosaurs to Mr Darcy" has chosen a charming snap of Russell Gray on the roof of King's College Chapel, Cambridge. But it seems a little inappropriate for an illustration of his remarks on "the arches that support the structure". No doubt he trod – with awe – the upper surface of those soaring fan vaults – but they are not the roof on which he is pictured, which hovers over it like a kind of attic.

PS, I too have climbed aloft, by the spiral stair in the North West tower, where choirboys of earlier centuries have inscribed their initials in faultless Baskerville, with my late husband David – an Oxford scholar at King's in 1947. David was president of the student association in 1940, and in 1944 of the Returned Servicemen's Students' Association, which famously supported Professor Anderson's appointment of a conscientious objector to his philosophy staff.

**Joan Clouston**

## Who is the architect?

As a University of Auckland-trained architect, I of course found the item about the Grafton Campus Redevelopment in the Autumn 2009 issue of *Ingenio* (page 16-18) most interesting. But the total absence of identification of the project design team – possibly, hopefully, also Auckland graduates – was irritating to say the least. It was as though the buildings and their relationships to each other sprang fully grown out of the ground and had no authorship. To the point where one might think Iain Martin and Peter Fehl may well have been the designers.

Could do better, *Ingenio*.

**Grahame Anderson (DipArch 1962)**

*The architects for this project are JASMAX of Auckland and Daryl Jackson Architects Pty Ltd from Melbourne.*

### Send your thoughts to:

Tess Redgrave  
Editor

*Ingenio*

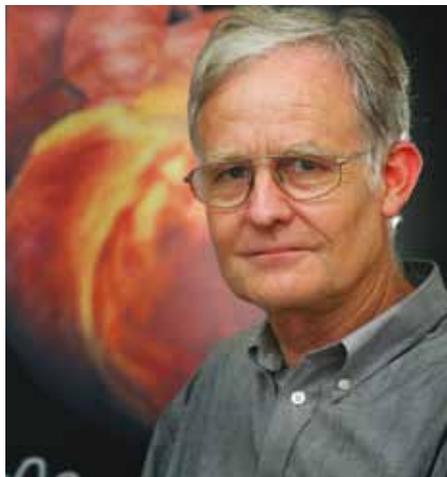
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Preference will be given to letters that address the content of the magazine. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and content.

## Professor wins Rutherford medal



As *Ingenio* went to print, we learnt the founder and director of the University's Auckland Bioengineering Institute, Distinguished Professor Peter Hunter had won New Zealand's prestigious Rutherford Medal.

The medal is the highest award instituted by the Royal Society of New Zealand. It recognises exceptional contributions to the advancement

and promotion of public awareness, knowledge and understanding in addition to eminent research or technological practice by a person or group in any field of science, mathematics, social science, or technology.

Peter, who is a Professor of Engineering Science and a fellow of the Royal Society of London, pioneered the world's first anatomically correct computer simulation of the human heart. Today the institute he founded is a world leader in computational physiology and biomedical engineering and a leading player in the Human Physiome Project. This comprises an international network of researchers who are developing mathematical models to link every gene, cell, protein, tissue and organ of the human body into a web resource for patient diagnosis and medical treatment. See [www.royalsociety.org.nz](http://www.royalsociety.org.nz)

## Top ranking

The University of Auckland continues to be among the top 100 universities in the world, according to the latest world university rankings published by the *Times Higher Education* - QS World University Rankings in October.

In 2009, the University's position strengthened to 61st compared to 65th in 2008.

In three subject rankings, the University was placed in the top 50 in the world: Arts & Humanities 42nd; Life Sciences & Biomedicine 40th; and Social Sciences 37th. It was also placed 55th in Engineering & IT, and 83rd in Natural Sciences.

Furthermore, in the important rankings assigned by academic peers and employers, the University was ranked 38th and 40th respectively.

"While we recognise that these rankings do fluctuate year to year, nonetheless it is an incredible achievement, particularly given that New Zealand invests less per student or per staff member in its universities than any other western country," said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stuart McCutcheon.

"Clearly our education system delivers value for money and an internationally-respected university that ranks amongst the very best in the world."

The University of Auckland was the only New Zealand university to be placed in the top 100 in the *Times Higher Education* rankings.

# Uniservices

## The start of something big

**Auckland UniServices Limited is the largest commercialisation company of its kind in Australasia and a wholly owned company of The University of Auckland.**

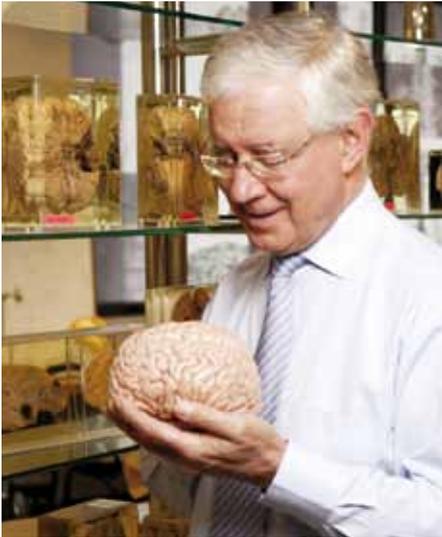
In a world of widely distributed knowledge, companies cannot afford to rely entirely on their own research; they seek innovation from external sources. UniServices specialises in Open Innovation, having assisted many companies to solve challenging technical problems and realise opportunities that neither party could have identified alone.

We have become experts at creatively linking business to the research capabilities of The University of Auckland and to find the inherently big thoughts that exist at the interface between hard business questions and the creativity of our academic researchers.

As part of UniServices' 2009 Open Innovation Programme, which links business to the research capability of The University of Auckland, 12 Summer Student Scholarships have been awarded, for students from science, engineering, and business disciplines.

Students will be given the opportunity to work on challenging 'real - world' problems with projects for some of New Zealand's most well-known companies, including; Telecom, Fonterra, Frucor, and Greenlea.

**We are proud to be starting something big with our future academics and thinkers and at the same time support New Zealand's businesses in open innovative thinking.**



## Centre for brain research

New Zealand's first Centre for Brain Research was launched at the University's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at the beginning of November.

Led by the eminent neuroscientist Professor Richard Faull, the centre will investigate a broad range of neurological disorders including stroke, epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, and muscular dystrophy.

"Around one in five New Zealanders will develop some form of neurological disease, and the incidence will only increase as our population ages," says Richard. The personal, social, and financial costs are enormous. We need to make a concerted, well-coordinated effort learn more about these disorders and how to prevent and treat them."

The centre is based on a partnership between scientists, doctors, and people affected by brain disease. More than 200 researchers from across the University are involved, as are most of the neurologists and neurosurgeons in the Auckland region and many community groups supporting patients and their families.

The intention is to facilitate the flow of information and ideas so that scientists can direct their attention to the most pressing, and promising, areas of research and their discoveries can be fast-tracked into the clinic.

An example of the broad-based collaborative research generating excitement as the centre opens its doors is work on brain plasticity. Neuroscientists working with stroke patients have already shown they can "prime" damaged parts of the brain to respond better

to rehabilitation. Now, in collaboration with neurologists, they are testing their technique in the hospital. Should the studies prove successful they hope to halve the length of time taken to introduce the process into standard practice.

Related research is investigating whether the brain can be primed using anti-depressants. See [www.cbr.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.cbr.auckland.ac.nz)

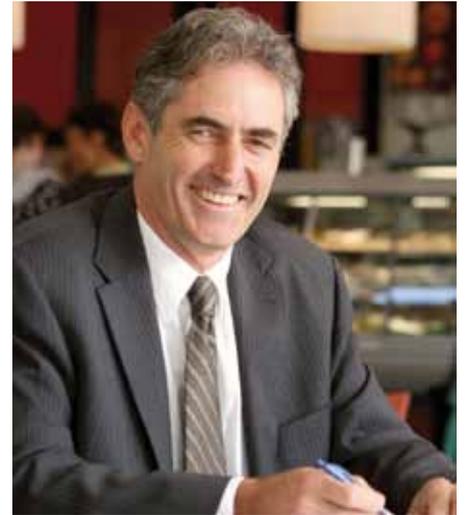
## Two new deans

The University has two new deans: Professor Jenny Dixon has been appointed as Dean of the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries (NICAI) and Professor Grant Guilford is the new Dean of Science.

Jenny holds a BSc in Geography and an MSc in Resource Management from the University of Canterbury, and a DPhil from the University of Waikato. She has had a distinguished career in teaching and research, leading multi-disciplinary project teams funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, Crown Research Institutes and local authorities.

Her research has focused on residential intensification, sustainability, urban governance and planning. Since joining The University of Auckland in 2001 as Professor of Planning, Jenny has held a number of leadership positions including Head of the Department of Planning, Head of the School of Architecture and Planning, Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate) and Associate Dean (International). She has been Acting Dean of NICAI since March of this year.

Professor Guilford holds Bachelor of Philosophy and Bachelor of Veterinary Science degrees from Massey University and a PhD in Nutrition from the University of California, Davis. He is an accomplished researcher who has published widely and is



experienced in establishing research consortia and partnerships for research excellence. Several successful commercial products have been developed from Professor Guilford's research, and he has led or participated in the commercialisation of nine start-up companies.

Professor Guilford has held senior roles at Massey University, most recently as Head of its Institute of Natural Sciences. Prior to that, he spent ten years as Head of the Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences. During his tenure the institute became the first veterinary school in the southern hemisphere to win accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association. He also led the creation of the Hopkirk Research Institute, a multi-million dollar joint venture between Massey University and AgResearch.

## Helping business innovate

This summer UniServices, the University's commercialisation company, is again hosting a unique Open Innovation programme for New Zealand Businesses.

"The central idea behind Open Innovation is that, in a world of widely distributed knowledge, companies cannot afford to rely entirely on their own research. They should seek innovation from external sources," says UniServices CEO, Dr Peter Lee.

Open Innovation is a process whereby industries link with University researchers to discover new products and services that neither could have created themselves.

"The distinct perspectives of both parties, the strong sense of purpose from business and the strong sense of possibility from researchers, are brought together in a spirit of exploration and adventure," Peter explains. "The results often suggest fundamental new approaches to old problems.



“For example, who would have thought that the effects of maternal nutrition on child health could offer a means to dramatically increase pastoral productivity, unless farmers talked to specialists in epigenetics; who would have thought that film animation could be made more realistic by applying digital models of human anatomy, unless movie producers talked to bioengineers; and who would have thought that some of the world’s purest aluminium could be produced in New Zealand, unless refinery engineers talked with operations researchers.”

The Open Innovation programme starts with a company sharing some of its most difficult and important challenges for new and improved processes, products or businesses with the UniServices team.

“We then spend several weeks exploring potential solutions among the diverse array of research expertise at our disposal,” explains Peter.

The resulting long list of possible solutions is then vetted by the client to a “short list” of the most interesting candidates. If there is agreement that the opportunities warrant a closer look, UniServices forms a diverse team of experts to test the feasibility of the “short list”. Frequent interactions with the partner during this phase ensure the evaluation remains on track and tuned to the most valuable outcomes.

“Invariably the result is a set of potentially game-changing proposals that target the partner’s most important strategic challenges,” says Peter. “The process is at our cost, since we are confident that we can entice our partners with irresistible opportunities that warrant further research and development.”

See [www.uniservices.co.nz](http://www.uniservices.co.nz)

## Equivalent to being drunk

While New Zealand drivers adapt to the new law banning cellphone use in cars, alumna Charlene Hallet (BSc 2007, BSc(Hons) 2008, MSc 2009) is forging a research career looking at the technology’s potentially dangerous impact.

A few years ago frightening first-hand experience made Charlene want to know more about the danger of text messaging behind the wheel.

“A lot of my friends would text message while driving and as a passenger I was very scared” she says. “On one occasion I was travelling with my friends and the driver was text messaging - he started to swerve over the centre line and next thing we knew we were pulled over by a police officer. What really interested me was that the driver made up an excuse, saying he had dropped something rather than admit he’d been replying to a text. Since texting wasn’t illegal I wondered why he lied.”

Charlene wanted to know whether texting while driving was as common as she suspected and what people thought about the risks, but found that most of the existing research focused on voice calls. She felt that it overlooked the important group of young drivers who were more likely to text than talk and were overrepresented in road accidents. So working with supervisor Dr Tony Lambert in the Department of Psychology she turned her questions into a masters research project.

Charlene’s nationwide survey of 1,052 people revealed that the vast majority were aware of the dangers, with almost 90 percent saying that texting impaired their driving. In spite of this, 66 percent admitted reading at least one text per week and more than 60 percent spent at least one minute on a voice call whilst driving. Since acknowledging the risk was not enough to change people’s behaviour, Charlene concluded that strict law enforcement should be introduced if the accident rate on New Zealand roads was to be reduced.

The subsequent change in the driving rules has now banned hand-held cellphone use but Charlene and Tony, and colleagues around the country, have argued that hands-free phones are just as dangerous. They say that the research shows it is the conversation itself, not handling the phone, that causes distraction and the level of impairment is equivalent to being drunk.

Charlene is now part of a French research team Institut National de Recherche sur les Transports et leur Sécurité developing ways to measure the degree of distraction that arises from the use of cellphones and other in-vehicle technologies while driving.

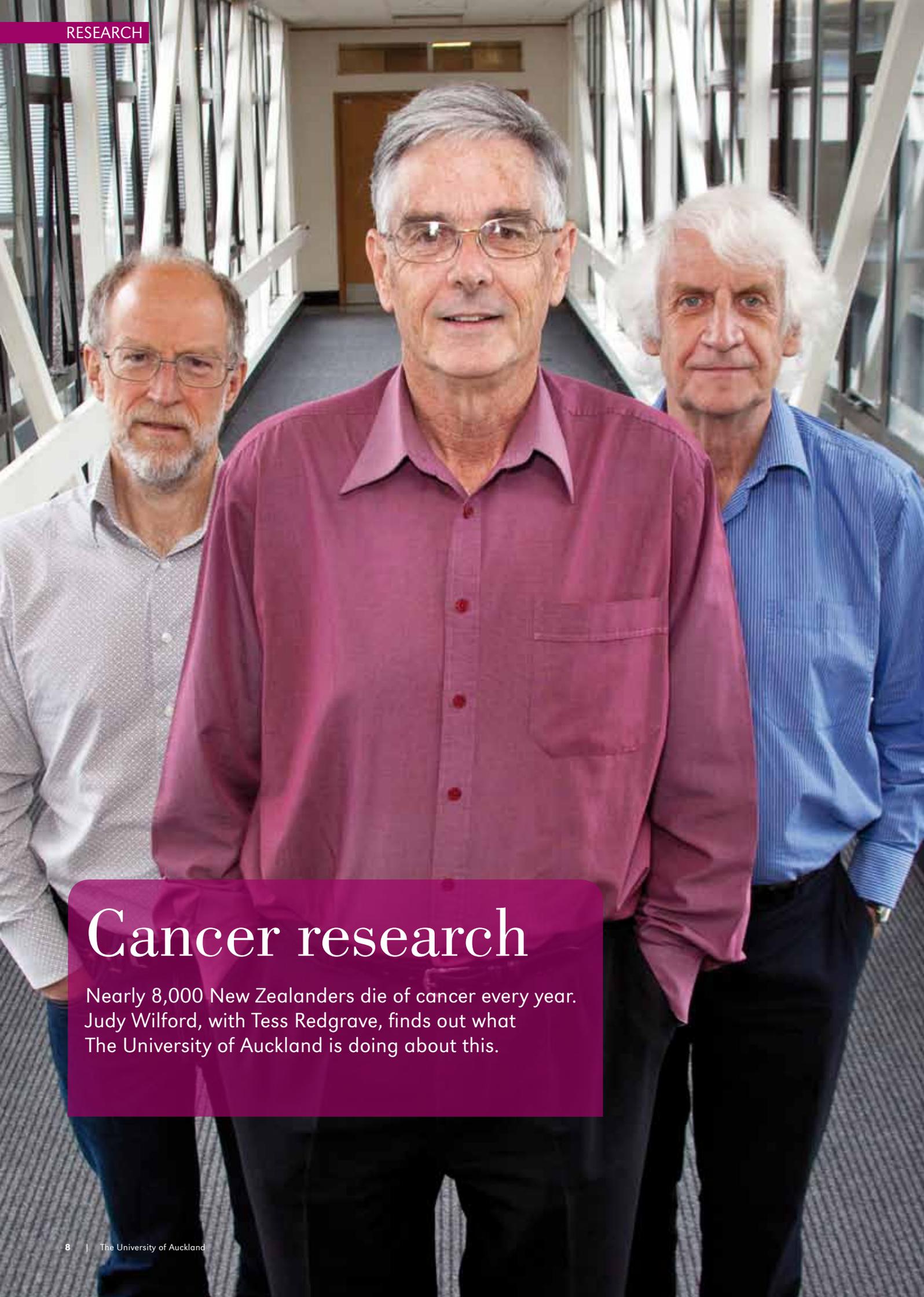
“Until technologies are available that can mitigate these risks, cellphones are putting all road users in danger and, ideally, I would like to see a complete ban,” she says.

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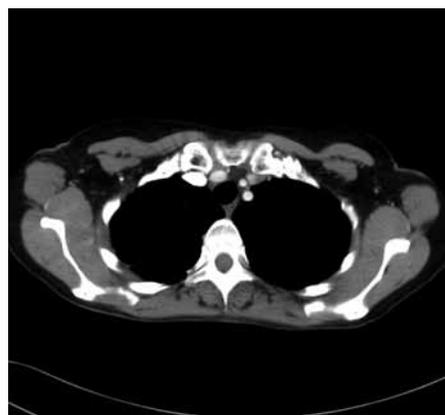
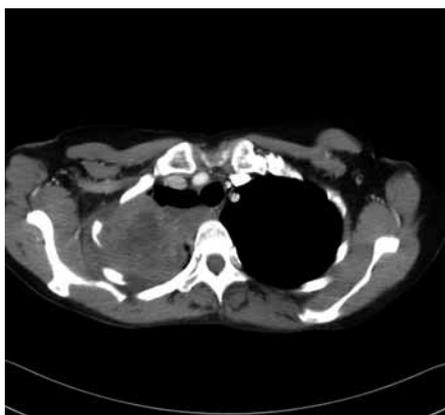


# Cancer research

Nearly 8,000 New Zealanders die of cancer every year. Judy Wilford, with Tess Redgrave, finds out what The University of Auckland is doing about this.

Professor Bill Denny (front), Director of the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre, with co-directors Professor Bill Wilson (left) and Professor Bruce Baguley (right).

PHOTO: GODFREY BOEHNKE



A lung cancer scan before (left) and after (right) treatment with DMXAA and standard chemotherapy treatment.

“It is often said that cancer is 100 different diseases,” says Professor Bill Wilson.

Bill is one of the leading researchers from the many eminent teams working across disciplines at the University to advance global knowledge of cancer from multiple perspectives.

“Those who say it’s 100 diseases are quite wrong,” he adds. “It is millions of diseases. Every cancer is unique. They’re all genetic freaks of nature, every one.”

On the trail of these freaks of nature, analysing their structure, discovering and trialling drugs to target their different proteins and processes, seeking their genetic causes and their environmental triggers, finding ways of prevention through nutrition and control through vaccination, looking for biomarkers that show their presence and progression (or regression), refining the tools for diagnosis, looking at the social effects of the diseases in families and communities, at the psychological responses of the individuals attacked by them, and at the patients’ experiences as they move through the health system, are several hundred researchers across the University. The range is astounding and all are important. Those featured in this article are just a sample.

Undoubtedly the University’s highest-profile cancer research team is the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre (ACSRC), a world-leading centre for cancer drug development. Professor Bill Denny, its director, says collaboration across the disciplines is the first essential for drug discovery, and that large groups of researchers are required.

“In the centre we have about 85 staff across the disciplines from chemistry to molecular biology, pharmacology and oncology.”

Bill Denny sees the centre’s main task as

delivering novel compounds, focusing on all aspects of that enterprise, from identifying targets that are different in tumours from normal tissue through to making the compounds that might hit those targets and taking them through to clinical trials.

The centre has been extremely successful at this, with eight drugs so far being brought to clinical trial, four of which are the first of their kind. Vadimezan (or DMXAA) has been particularly successful. “It is the first agent for disrupting blood supply to tumours,” Bill Denny explains. “By recruiting the body’s immune system it selectively damages the cells lining a tumour’s blood vessels.”

Later stages of this project were developed with British company Antisoma, culminating in a deal with global drug company Novartis, potentially worth \$800 million. Phase three clinical trials of the drug have just been completed with 1200 patients in New Zealand and 20 other countries. If the trial results are positive, the drug could be registered for worldwide use by the end of next year.

Current core projects of the centre fall into two major areas: creation of drugs to do with hypoxia (the low-oxygen conditions characteristic of tumours) – of which one is already in the second phase of trials – and creation of drugs which inhibit kinases (a kinase is a type of enzyme that adds phosphate groups to proteins, thereby initiating cascades of signalling in the cell.)

“Mutations that control the signalling pathways are the major causes of cancer,” says Bill Denny. “Basically the way the kinase inhibitors work is to shut off the signalling pathways that are abnormal in cancer cells. The main aim is to restore cancer cells back to normal – though there are many different ways of doing that.”

Co-director of the centre Professor Bill

Wilson, working with Bill Denny and joint co-director Professor Bruce Baguley, is leading the team working on exploiting hypoxia in tumours by developing a series of pro-drugs designed to become activated in regions that lack oxygen.

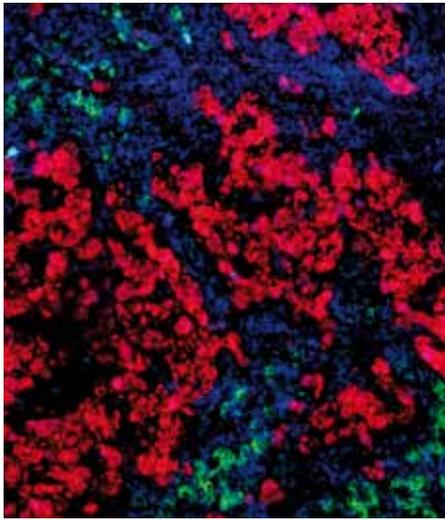
He acknowledges – with a wry smile – that there are major challenges in “targeting something that isn’t there”.

“The idea is for these drugs to diffuse from the bloodstream into the hypoxic regions of tumours where they become switched on so that they are toxic to cells in these regions. We exploit the fact that tumours have a lousy blood supply.”

The first drug from that programme – a compound called PR-104 – underwent its first human trials at Waikato Hospital in New Zealand, and is now undergoing international trials with liver and lung cancer patients in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and several countries in Asia. This had its start through a company called Proacta, a spin-out from the University’s commercialisation company, Auckland UniServices Ltd.

A number of other hypoxia drugs are still in various stages of development. These projects are long-term, Bill Wilson emphasises. “From bright idea to drug in the clinic can take three to five years with a favourable following breeze, but 20 years is not uncommon.”

Around half the drugs used in cancer treatment have been developed in academic settings, and Bill Wilson sees the University as having a special role: “We’re not a pharmaceutical company and we shouldn’t attempt to become one. The role of the University is to address some of the hard questions and develop the technology, the expertise, the critical functioning that is needed to actually advance, and to allow others to advance as well.”



Human melanoma infiltrated lymph node showing melanoma cells (red), T-lymphocytes (blue) and B-lymphocytes (green)

In investigating the rules for developing drugs that will diffuse into tissues lacking in oxygen, Bill Wilson and his team have developed some novel technology which is already helping researchers around the world. An example is a three-dimensional model of tissues, where mathematical modelling techniques are used to measure the diffusion of drugs through the tissues.

The ACSRC is associated with the broader Maurice Wilkins Centre for Molecular Biodiscovery (MWC), a Centre of Research Excellence based at the University and another major player in drug discovery.

The MWC and ACSRC work closely together, sharing expertise on many collaborative enterprises, including the work on hypoxia and kinase inhibitors – though the MWC is not confined to cancer but also investigates infectious diseases, diabetes and heart disease.

Its recently-appointed director, Associate Professor Rod Dunbar (Biological Sciences), is focused in his own research on developing a vaccine for melanoma, which occurs in New Zealand at a higher rate than anywhere else in the world, with 269 deaths in 2005 (the last year for which figures are available).

The vaccines he is working on (with a team of young researchers) are therapeutic rather than preventive, designed to prime the patient's immune system to help combat the disease.

"The idea" says Rod, "is to stimulate a particular kind of white blood cell, a cytotoxic T-cell, 'CTL', which is capable of identifying cancer cells and killing them by injecting them with toxins."

One way to stimulate these anti-cancer T-cells is to identify the molecules that are present in cancer cells but not in normal cells,

then to purify them and reintroduce them into the patient in special vaccines.

T-cells are immensely diverse, Rod explains, which makes it almost certain that whatever "enemy" invades there will always be a few T-cells capable of sensing it.

In the case of an invading virus, these few T-cells will grow rapidly in number and form a defending army.

However, the T-cells capable of sensing cancer cells don't react so strongly, and need some encouragement to behave in a similar way, such as stimulation by a vaccine.

An international trial of a new vaccine for melanoma that included New Zealand patients has recently been completed and results were being analysed in Auckland (and in two other centres worldwide) as *Ingenio* went to print.

Trialling, of course, is one of the crucial links in the chain from bright idea to drug in the clinic, and this has received a significant boost in this country over recent years through the establishment of Cancer Trials New Zealand (CTNZ), founded and led by another researcher with a strong international reputation, Michael Findlay. He is both a professor of oncology at The University of Auckland and a practising medical oncologist.

CTNZ is invaluable in the opportunities it offers for taking drug discovery as far as is possible in New Zealand – both directly for the treating of cancer and for the alleviation of the side effects of treatments. Present work, for example, includes trialling of a product, produced by Fonterra in association with The University of Auckland, which might improve tolerability of chemotherapy. CTNZ is also taking part in a large-scale trial of the long and short-term use of Herceptin, run from Finland.

"We are also interested in trying to help people design their own trials," Michael explains, "so part of our infrastructure includes expert statisticians and trial coordinators who can help design protocols."

"In addition we are looking beyond drug development. An example is a current study of how people progress through the health system, to see if there are blocks in the services. This yields a kind of knowledge that can be applied immediately to improving treatment"

In the meantime cancer research is moving forward at an unprecedented rate, aided by an "explosion" of information technology that offers extraordinary insights and even bigger challenges.



Rod Dunbar

PHOTO: STEPHEN BARKER

# The way of the future

Every cell in a human body has 30 or 40 thousand genes. Every cancerous cell in a tumour therefore has a similarly enormous number.

Ten years ago the world scientific community sequenced the first human genome at a cost of \$3 billion. The thousand-dollar human genome is now almost here. And 2009 is notable for being the year of the first tumour genome.

"There's a technology revolution going on in the biological sciences," says Professor Bill Wilson. "I think most people are aware of the revolution, but not of its magnitude.

"The rate of acceleration and improvement in sequencing technology is not just exponential. It's an exponential raised to the power of an exponential. It's absolutely going through the roof. And it's happening so quickly that I think it's caught the research community by surprise."

What it has shown is that cancers once thought of as single types in fact comprise a number of sub-types. "Ultimately," says Bill, "every tumour is different in every patient, and different again if it regrows after treatment.

"If we can sequence individual patients' tumours – and understand exactly which molecules to target – it puts an extraordinary power in diagnostics, and radically changes the way we think about cancer research and treatment."

Bill believes it will eventually be possible to consult a huge international database and say: "Ah, the tumour in my patient looks remarkably like this one that a woman had in Finland a few years ago. Now what treatment did she have and what was the result?"

"Though this may seem like science fiction now," he says, "it is the direction in which we're heading. We have to make sure that we're looking far enough ahead, that we see what the technology is going to make possible, and start to readjust what we do in the light of that."

Associate Professor Cristin Print (Department of Molecular Medicine) is working with his colleagues Associate Professor Andrew Shelling (from the School of Medicine) and Dr Edmund Crampin (from the Auckland Bioengineering Institute) to direct a large research team at the forefront of the revolution, gauging the research directions of the future, making sure we're not fighting yesterday's wars.

With a medical degree and a PhD in Molecular Medicine, Cris describes himself in his younger days as "a hardcore molecular cellular biologist".

However, he has realised over the last ten years that what is going to be fastest in changing cancer patient care is finding effective ways of using the immense amounts of data that are now becoming available.

"The task of teasing that information out is what is called bioinformatics," he says. "The idea is to take huge amounts of information about tumours, about the drugs that target the particular molecules implicated in their growth, and about the individual patients' responses to them, and make this information available in ways that researchers and clinicians can use.

"If you're going to make use of some of this information you often have to test hypotheses

**“Ultimately, every tumour is different in every patient, and different again if it regrows after treatment.”**

that arise from it. For example the information might point to the importance of a particular molecule to the rate of growth of a particular sort of tumour. So you need to find a way to test this in the lab. This means my research group spans the fields of mathematics and old-fashioned laboratory biology. We feel the most productive thing in bioinformatics is to be a jack of all trades – because there's quite a gulf between the pure mathematicians and the computing specialists, and between the pure biologists and clinicians. We are trying to act as translators between those groups."

This has large implications for the trialling of drugs as well as for the education of medical students.

"The clinical trials of the future are going to be different from now. Increasingly patients in clinical trials are going to be selected on the basis of how a particular drug is likely to work on them.

"The trials will involve smaller numbers – with drugs more specifically targeted to people in whom the treatment is more likely to succeed, with fewer bad side-effects.

Bioinformatics can help with that selection, but will also play a part in later use of the drug, where you would be screening patients to see which types of drugs would be most effective. Some of those drugs may only be licensed for use with patients who have been genetically screened to show that their tumour is of the type that is likely to respond."

One of the challenges for clinicians now is to partner new treatments with patients for whom they will be effective. Therefore there is a lot of movement among researchers to discover biomarkers which will reveal what happens to the cancer when a new drug is introduced.

"If we're going to move to this new molecularly targeted therapy, individualised for every patient, then we're going to have to have very good biomarkers. Fortunately that is an area where The University of Auckland is performing very well," says Rod Dunbar from the MWC.

Cris believes the University's great strength is in its efficiently functioning networks.

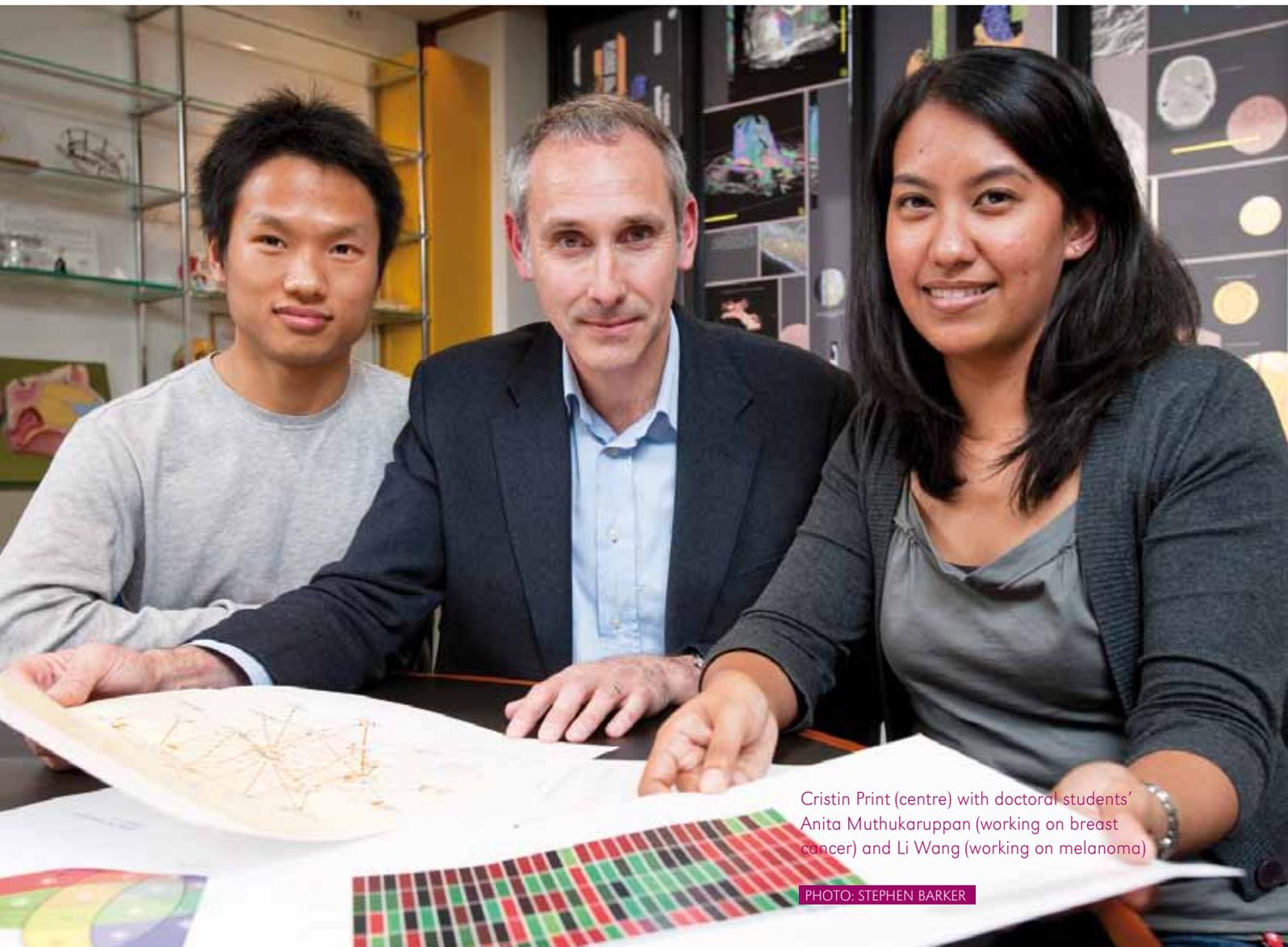
"That's the whole beauty of the University's culture that I haven't seen at other places. Clinicians are linked with the scientists like me, we're all linked in with the education of students, medical people are linked with drug development, and the basic scientists form part of the teams.

"I guess I see that particularly because bioinformatics is involved in bringing all those areas together. Some of the universities I've worked in overseas have much more of a research silo mentality. I think we have a real creative advantage here because we collaborate across disciplines."

Cris believes it essential to involve the research teams in the education of medical students and science graduates. "The leaders of the future need to understand both sides, bringing biological, computing and mathematical ideas to bear on very clinical problems."

One highly innovative teaching programme, initiated by Cris and like-minded colleagues and taught for the first time from July this year, is designed to introduce medical students to cancer treatment early in their studies and in an integrated and holistic way.

Created jointly over the last three years by Cris Print and Associate Professor Roger Booth – an immunologist and health psychologist – along with Radiation Oncologist Associate Professor Graham



Cristin Print (centre) with doctoral students' Anita Muthukaruppan (working on breast cancer) and Li Wang (working on melanoma)

PHOTO: STEPHEN BARKER

Stevens, Kathryn Siow, Development Manager for Phase I of the Medical Programme, Barbara O'Connor, Educational Project Manager for Medical and Health Sciences, and Associate Professor Philippa Poole from the Department of Medicine, this patient-centred learning activity has already earned much praise from the second-year students, who work through the materials online and on DVDs.

Consisting of a set of video interviews between three patients with different types of colorectal cancer and the health professionals who assist and treat them during their illnesses, it is accompanied by authentic and typical letters to (and from) specialists, pathology reports, X-rays, blood tests and MRI results, genetic analyses, and all the paperwork that would be involved in a real case.

Also recorded were multidisciplinary meetings between the various health professionals, medical procedures such as colonoscopies, video clips on such processes as the fitting of a colostomy bag, and reports on relevant research being conducted at the University.

The interviewees were real GPs, gastroenterologists, oncologists, surgeons and palliative care specialists, speaking as they would with genuine patients. The interviewees were actors who were briefed on the disease, and on their responses at the various stages. The interviews, unscripted, achieved a very authentic "feel".

Before the recordings were made, says Roger Booth, he believed the students would be bored with the interviews at their full length. However, when he saw the videos he changed his mind.

"I found myself sitting for two hours, entranced. They were packed with information, emotionally engaging, very sad and moving at times. There is so much rich learning in there, not only about cancer but about patient experiences, about interviewing techniques, about listening and communication, about dealing with upsetting issues, and about palliative care.

"The students are essentially understanding what the patients are going through, what happens at every stage and what this means to the patients and their families."

Roger, who has led the development of psycho-neuroimmunology at the University, has also been working with Professor of Psychology Linda Cameron in a major research project looking at tackling cancer from an entirely different angle.

# Psycho-oncology

In 2003, Linda and Roger launched a study looking at the benefits of a psychosocial support programme for women suffering from breast cancer.

With funding support from the then fledgling NZ Breast Cancer Research Trust, the study recruited more than 150 women from an Auckland breast cancer clinic who had had a primary diagnosis of breast cancer within the previous six weeks. These women were then divided into three groups, with the intervention group participating in a programme adapted from the "Healing Journey" devised by New Zealander, Professor Alastair Cunningham, currently based at the University of Toronto.

The 12-week programme involved weekly two-hour sessions led by two specifically trained psychotherapists/facilitators (a male and female). Participants were given education about emotion and cancer, training in relaxation techniques, imagery, meditation, setting priorities and goals, emotional disclosure through writing, and anger management.

"For a lot of the women their cancer diagnosis was a wake-up call," says Linda, who has been researching cancer-related issues for 20 years looking specifically at decision-making around cancer and at how people cope with the emotional distress of a cancer diagnosis. "They were re-evaluating,

asking themselves: what am I doing with my life? Should I be working in this job? What do I want to do? There were exercises to help them identify how they wanted to lead their lives and what they wanted to prioritise."

The women were given therapeutic writing tasks so they could write about their deepest thoughts and feelings. "People often find if they're able to get it out and put it down on paper it relieves the emotional distress," says Linda, "and there's considerable research to back this up."

At the same time that the intervention group participants were being measured for the impact the Healing Journey programme had on their well-being and perceptions of their cancer, researchers also measured a control group of primary breast cancer patients receiving standard care and a third group of women called "decliners" who had declined to participate in the intervention study.

After four months, women in the intervention group were using emotional regulation strategies, relaxation-related techniques and reported greater perceived control over their illness and less perceived risk of recurrence of their cancer, while the other groups did not exhibit these changes and, in fact, the decliners reported a decrease in perceived control.

But perhaps most significantly, nine months after the beginning of the study, an

independent psychologist did phone interviews with participants in each of the three groups.

"We had independent raters score the psychological and emotional components of each interview," explains Linda. "We found the women in the intervention group expressed more emotions during the interview, both positive and negative, and they expressed fewer defence mechanisms, or avoidance tactics, and reported greater changes in their lives, in relation to the standard care and decliner groups.

"Our intervention was very much focused on enabling women to process their emotions and talk about their emotions," says Linda. "We know that when coping with stressful experiences, particularly within the domain of cancer, the people who suppress their negative emotions and hide them from others actually do worse, they fare more poorly and show more emotional stress over time.

"So in the intervention group we were focusing on trying to reduce that emotional suppression and help women re-prioritise their lives."

Interestingly, the intervention groups were so effective for some of the women that they continued meeting long after the study.

When Linda and Roger published their findings in the journal *Psycho-Oncology* they concurred with a growing body of

## Breast cancer

"Seriously, breast cancer's not a big deal. Because a cure is on the way."

These are the hard-hitting words of the New Zealand Breast Cancer Research Trust's latest billboard campaign.

The campaign, fuelled by ground-breaking, internationally significant research at The University of Auckland, could halt the devastation caused by breast cancer to millions of women around the world.

In April this year, the University's Breast Cancer Research group based at the Liggins Institute and headed up by Professor of Breast Cancer, Peter Lobie announced that it had zeroed in on three key molecules implicated in the spread of up to 90 percent of breast cancers. Called oncogenes these cancer-causing molecules are Trefoil Factors (TF-1 and TFF-3), Growth Hormone (GH) and Atermin.

Although found in other cancers too, the Trefoil Factors and Artemin are particularly predominant in breast cancer.

"We've found that women with a higher expression of these particular molecules have a worse outcome," says Peter. "Their cancer metastasizes sooner and they die sooner."

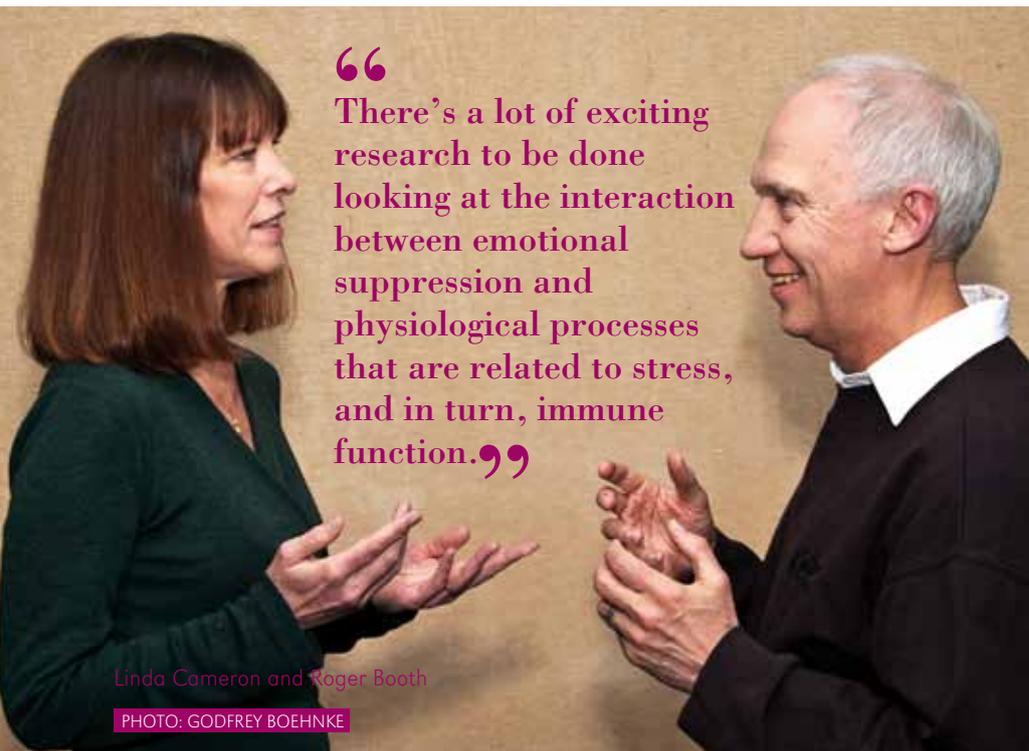
Building cell-based models and watching tumour growth and regression in animals, Peter and his team have successfully shown they can inhibit the action of these molecules. "This shifts the balance in the cancer cell making them less likely to survive."

Working through two companies – Perseis Therapeutics Limited and Saratan Therapeutics Limited – and with significant funding support from the NZ Breast Cancer Trust, Peter and his team are developing molecular targeted antibody-based drugs that will take out the functional affects of these oncogenes in much the same way Herceptin works on the 20

percent of women who are HER2 positive or Tamoxifen for women whose cancers are estrogen receptor positive. As with these drugs, there will have to be a level of personalisation, says Peter, with the drugs targeted at those who have the corresponding oncogene. "But while Herceptin and Tamoxifen require a biopsy, some of the targets we're developing may be able to be identified for the right woman from a blood test."

Although the targets (drugs) are yet to go to clinical trial, Peter is confident that they will be making a huge difference in the treatment of breast cancer which currently kills between 600 – 700 New Zealand women each year, within ten years.

"What the Breast Cancer Research Trust means by a cure is that breast cancer will be turned into a chronic disease and a sufferer's life expectancy in the normal range, meaning they could die from something else."



“There’s a lot of exciting research to be done looking at the interaction between emotional suppression and physiological processes that are related to stress, and in turn, immune function.”

Linda Cameron and Roger Booth

PHOTO: GODFREY BOEHNKE

international research which supports developing self-regulation, psycho-social interventions for individuals with cancer.

“Basically we’ve answered the question that these sort of things do make a difference,” says Roger. “We’ve also got a better steer on the sorts of people they might make a difference for and how you might set these up as adjunctive therapeutic interventions across New Zealand, for example.”

Adding another dimension to the study, Roger and Linda collected some immunological data from the three groups of breast cancer sufferers.

“We measured immune function over the first 18 months and found a difference between the control group and the intervention group in relation to the number of circulating natural killer cells – a lymphocyte population involved in dealing with cancer,” explains Roger. “This doesn’t necessarily mean the intervention group’s immune system was more effective in dealing with the disease,” he cautions, “but the difference was significant and in the right direction.”

“There’s a lot of exciting research to be done looking at the interaction between emotional suppression and physiological processes that are related to stress, and in turn, immune function,” says Linda. She is a member of the US National Cancer Institute’s Health Cognition Group and is identifying and developing psycho-oncology research

programmes at an international level. In New Zealand she and Dr Melanie Schlatter have recently completed another study looking at how emotional suppression tendencies may influence how women with breast cancer cope with chemotherapy.

“We found women high in emotional suppression (of anxiety, anger and depression) reported more symptoms during chemotherapy treatment and more distress over their symptoms. So now I’m interested to see if a psychosocial support can help these women.”

## Prevention

But how might we prevent cancer? This is the focus of Lynn Ferguson, Professor of Nutrition who eats a lot more kumara than she used to.

And yes, she answers, that is in direct response to her research, and she does make a point of practising what she preaches.

Lynn’s main interest is in prevention of cancer through safe and sensible nutritional choices.

Generally her recommendations are to limit salt, and alcohol – which is implicated in many cancers – to take regular physical activity, keep your body-mass index down, and eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables in a variety of textures and colours.

Processed meat, particularly of the heavily-

salted kind, is best taken in moderation – and meat, fish or chicken which is flame-grilled shouldn’t be eaten too often, “though an occasional barbecue is unlikely to cause harm”.

This is all in line with the guidelines of the World Cancer Research Fund, for which Lynn was one of the reviewers.

Lynn is convinced, through her research with animals, that high-wheat breakfast cereals such as all-bran or wheat flakes have definite protective effects. Vitamin C and Selenium have been proven to give protection as well, and she notes that much of the New Zealand soil is deficient in Selenium, placing males at more risk of prostate cancer.

Her trials confirming a protective effect from eating kumara and sweet potato have shown that this is particularly related to red colouring, especially the pinkish “stippling” found in the flesh of some kumara.

The stippling is a response to environmental stress, she believes. It seems to be protective to the kumara, but also to the person who eats it – providing a level of anti-oxidants similar to blueberries or red wine, but much cheaper.

Somewhat controversial, at least in some groups, is Lynn’s contention that there is nothing to be feared from eating genetically modified food. Her belief that vegetables need not be organic has also led to what she calls some “interesting discussions”.

When shopping, she chooses vegetables that are fresh and glowing with health from high-turnover plant barns or farmers’ markets. She always rejects vegetables, organic or not, which show signs of insect or fungal damage.

The most dangerous cancer-producing agent so far found in food, Lynn explains, is a substance called Aflatoxin B1, which grows in fungus on badly-stored nuts, cereals or legumes, causing a particularly deadly form of liver cancer.

“The problem with some of the fungal moulds is that it is possible to wash the nuts, roast them, and then they look and taste alright. There have been examples of unscrupulous traders doing just this. But the growth on the fungus may still be present and dangerously toxic – and there may be other substances growing in fungus which are just as dangerous but as yet undiscovered. So I tend to be cautious about my sources of food, and would avoid any kind of fungal damage.”

Lynn says her focus on preventing cancer through nutrition makes her the “odd one out” at the ACSRC, where she holds a half-time position.

“But I believe it’s much better never to get cancer than to recover from it,” she says.

# Changing attitudes toward philanthropy



Having spent the majority of my 25-year fundraising career in the tertiary sector – 22 years in North America and the last three in New Zealand – I was initially surprised by the widely held belief in New Zealand that tertiary education ought to be free – that is, supported by the general taxpayer. Then I remembered the same belief being held by the alumni of government-supported universities in North America. With university annual operating costs rising at rates that were substantially beyond the ability of North American governments to meet with tax revenue alone, attitudes toward the financing of tertiary education had to change. The universities were impelled to engage with their alumni and other friends to develop strategies to diversify their revenue base.

The funding dilemma first faced by government-supported universities in North America and now being faced by the tertiary sector in New Zealand is best summarised by a quote from the former President of the University of Michigan, Jim Duderstadt: “We used to be state-supported, then state-assisted, and now we are state-located.” Understanding the necessity of self-reliance and sustainability, these North American universities diversified their revenue base through institutional and faculty entrepreneurship and, to the extent possible, with philanthropy.

While The University of Auckland has engaged in institutional and faculty entrepreneurship for decades, it has only in recent times begun to embrace philanthropy as a means of broadening its revenue base and achieving its institutional mission of first-rate teaching, research and service. With the establishment of the University Foundation in November 2002 and the launch of its first comprehensive fundraising campaign for \$100 million in November 2008, the University has taken the first steps to create a foundation of support in the form of endowment and current-use philanthropic funds to supplement and enhance annual operating budgets.

The importance of endowments as a part of the strategy to provide for the future of an institution is not a new concept. In fact it can be traced back to Roman times when in the fifth century BC Plato left his Academy and surrounding farmland to his nephew for use by his followers. That first gift generated income for the Academy for nearly a thousand years. While this was the start of a new idea, it later progressed to a more modern view of fundraising for endowments.

Recently, Eve Proper, institute coordinator at the Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, reported in an article entitled “Bringing educational fundraising back to Great Britain” for the *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* that the modern roots for private funding are actually British with early investment by donors a key factor in the establishment of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. She concluded that as government investment increased the British universities forgot about fundraising for endowment.

This historical reliance by British universities on government support is clearly reflected in a recent list of international universities with billion-dollar (United States) endowments. The list includes more than 60 US universities (nearly half of which are government-supported) and only two British universities. After decades of relying on government to provide a significant portion of annual operating budgets, the British universities have now gone back to their roots and are

trying to diversify their revenue base.

For some time New Zealand governments of all political shades have recognised they too could no longer continue to support the tertiary sector at past levels and to its credit Government has started to include philanthropy as part of the funding equation. The first significant step toward strengthening the role of philanthropy in New Zealand was taken in April 2008 with changes to the tax rules governing charitable giving. Under the new rules individual donors are able to claim a 33.3 percent tax rebate on all donations up to their annual net income; and companies and Māori authorities are able to claim a tax deduction for donations up to their annual net income.

While the impact of Government’s recent philanthropic tax reform is yet to be realised more is needed to encourage private investment in the tertiary sector. Additional tax benefits such as philanthropic reciprocity with Australia for expatriates, tax rebates for gifts of tangible property, and government-matched programmes for gifts of endowment and research are all worthwhile incentives that have proved useful in other countries.

Alumni can no longer hope for a return to the “good old days” when government and the taxpayer were the primary financial investors in The University of Auckland. Rather, they must now look to themselves as an equally vital part of a diversified investment equation – including funding from government, tuition fees and research contracts – to ensure the future of the institution and the society it services and contributes to.

✳ **Jim Hill is the University’s Director of Advancement and is based in the Department of External Relations**

PHOTO: STEPHEN BARKER



# A grand intellectual adventure

**Sam Elworthy** is relishing his “hands on role” at Auckland University Press. He talks to Tess Redgrave.

Ask Sam Elworthy, the director of Auckland University Press (AUP), the key to good publishing and he will say “imaginatively putting yourself in the place of the reader”.

It’s a dictum the 43-year-old, who grew up on a sheep and cattle farm near Timaru, has learnt by hard graft. Twelve years ago he boarded a train in New York with his German wife Maire and their first son Harry and headed to New Jersey to take up a job as an editorial assistant at Princeton University Press.

Although the pay was poor, the self-described “liberal-arts-over-educated-novel-and-

*New Yorker*-reader”, who had just completed a PhD in American History at Rutgers University, thrived in the world of scholarly publishing and was soon promoted to an editor’s role. But contrary to his arts and history background he was charged with publishing books in biology and the history of science.

“The last thing about science I remembered was groaning through sixth form maths using slide rules and log tables to tackle trigonometry,” he says. “To me it seemed formulaic, useless and plain hard.”

Sam, who exudes an infectious, down to earth enthusiasm, soon learnt the only way to

find out what science books to publish was to change places with his readers.

“By sitting in scientists’ offices, trekking up the Rockies with birders, and listening to mathematicians walk me through equations, I worked out what was important in science, who had the best ideas; and I learnt what would sell by putting myself in the place of the people who read these books.”

It was an approach that paid off as he began producing popular science books, field guides and specialist monographs like *The Unified Neutral Theory of Biogeography and Biodiversity*, by Steve Hubbell. “You probably haven’t heard of it,” he tells me, “but for ecologists it quickly became the highest cited book in ecology in 20 years. It was probably one of the most important books I published

– it is still in print – and it proves that if you publish a serious book that is important it does sell well.”

As Sam began travelling from Stanford to Edinburgh to Aarhus tracking down the brightest scientists, he realised they were “tackling some of the most interesting intellectual questions around. For example, do we live our lives among random collections of atomised individuals or among tight, small-world networks with less than six degrees of separation? Is the world governed by linear, deterministic, cause and effect or by non-linear, chaotic and unpredictable forces?”

Sam and his family, which swelled to three boys (now aged 5, 9 and 12), lived in Lambertville on the banks of the Delaware River as he rose up through the ranks to become editor-in-chief of Princeton, publishing some 220 books each year. But when the director’s job came up at AUP, he leapt at the chance to bring his family home to New Zealand and to helm a small press, which publishes about 25 books each year, and where he could be more “hands on”.

“In America I had the excitement of being involved in strategy on a larger level. But here I have involvement with authors and editors; we’re more nimble to be able to say, for example, ‘let’s have a business list’ and be able to go for it. I’m involved in reading manuscripts – I read every book we publish, I couldn’t at Princeton – making them better, thinking how they should look, how we should sell them.”

Publishing books since the 1960s, AUP is renowned for its scholarly titles in history and politics, art and architecture, literature and poetry, Māori, Pacific and Asian Studies. Now Sam is broadening that brief to include science, business and health and he’s using the same dictum of imaginatively putting himself in his readers’ shoes.

“In New Zealand, we have fantastic publishing in areas like fiction, history and poetry and we have very undeveloped publishing in subjects like business, science and medicine. Are there no ideas, or no writers or readers in these fields? Or is this just a failure of our imagination?” he queries.

“I think as publishers it’s important we ask the question: what sort of books are needed here?”

One of the first results of this approach at AUP is *Wool to Weta: Transforming New Zealand’s Culture and Economy* by Wellington scientist and commentator, Paul Callaghan, which came out earlier this year. And *Changing Gears: How to take your Kiwi*

*Business from the Kitchen Table to the Board Room* by four academics from the University’s Business School has just been published.

Aimed at New Zealand owner-managers, it uses plain language, diagrams and exercises to help Kiwi businesses drive growth, profitability and market penetration.

“This is our first real business book and it will bring a new audience to the press,” enthuses Sam. “Reaching out to the business community in New Zealand is a very important part of what the Business School does and we can play a role in helping them to do that.”

Sam is drawing on his American experience to get some popular science books off the ground. A book by Radio New Zealand science reporter Veronika Meduna on science in Antarctica is in process as is a new guide to Auckland’s volcanoes complete with high

“**Publishers like me should be thinking hard about the value we bring to the relationship between authors and readers.**”

resolution maps and aerial photography.

Consumer health titles are proving more elusive as he looks for authors with the time, qualifications and writing ability to tackle key subjects. One in process is a book on longevity in New Zealand – why we live longer or shorter through history – co-written by Professor Alistair Woodward, head of the University’s School of Population Health and Tony Blakely from the University of Otago in Wellington.

In fact AUP has already waded into the medical arena with the recent publication of *A History of the ‘Unfortunate Experiment’ at National Women’s Hospital* by University Professor of History, Linda Bryder.

The day *Ingenio* visited Sam, Linda’s book had just hit the shops and was garnering considerable attention in the media.

“We knew from the start that the book was going to be controversial for the University as both the critic and conscience of society and for the press as an independent publisher of big and challenging ideas,” he says. “It’s a great role in a small country to challenge what people have believed about a particular event and suggest that things may have been different than what they thought and to do so with good scholarship behind it.”

But to publish such books the press must be independent of the University, reflects Sam. “We can never be just a subsidiary of the University. We sit alongside it but we have to be independent of it in terms of the decisions we make and the authors we go after. It reflects well on the University when we exemplify its goals and mission of high scholarship, disseminating scholarly knowledge to a broad audience and engaging with multiple communities in New Zealand.”

In America Princeton Press was just a speck on the publishing landscape whereas here a small press like AUP can really make a difference, says Sam. He points to the 2009 Montana Book Awards where AUP had six finalists – more than any other publisher – and won two: the Reference and Anthology section for *The Collected Poems of C K Stead, 1951-2006* and the 2009 New Zealand Society of Authors Jessie Mackay Award for the Best First Book of Poetry *Everything Talks*, by Sam Sampson.

One senses Sam is keen to make a difference to the New Zealand publishing scene – publishing is in the family blood, his uncle David having founded Shoal Bay Press – and he is no stranger to politics: Sam’s late father Jonathan Elworthy (David’s twin) was a cabinet minister in the Muldoon Government and as a student at Otago University, Sam was an editor on the student newspaper *Critic* and media officer for the Students’ Association. Now he is vice-president of the Publishers’ Association of New Zealand and in this capacity is looking at how publishers can interact effectively with government to ensure support for New Zealand creative work. He is also on the Copyright Licensing Ltd board which has established the Digital Publishing Forum to upskill New Zealand publishers and authors for the new world of digital books.

“In a world in which people can produce books themselves [on the internet], disseminate them to a core audience, and rise to the top through the wisdom of the crowd, publishers like me should be thinking hard about the value we bring to the relationship between authors and readers,” he says.

“Scholarly publishing is a grand intellectual adventure that requires you to take risks, actively create markets for new ideas, and to produce quality books that compel engagement. It’s also a business in which the market gives you feedback very quickly on whether your hunches and creativity are working or not.”

This is the second in a series on the future of the University and the 2012 “Leading the way” Campaign – where vision, strategic planning and philanthropy meet.

# Engineering and Bioengineering: The power of people

Attracting the best and brightest people is a key focus for the Faculty of Engineering and the Auckland Bioengineering Institute as they look to the future. Louise Callan finds out why.



Yao Yao (Fiona) Zhao and  
Michael McCracken

PHOTO: KATHRYN ROBINSON

A year ago when the University launched its first major strategic fundraising campaign, it provided the impetus for some soul-searching. The campaign came with its own University-wide goals and five areas of known strength to exploit and build on. Achieving progress in these areas would also further The University

of Auckland’s aim of becoming one of the world’s leading universities.

Beneath the campaign’s umbrella was a question each faculty, school and research institute needed to consider: what did they need to do to help meet the campaign’s goals?

The Faculty of Engineering and the Auckland Bioengineering Institute operate in

a world where the discipline of engineering, like science, now touches and shapes almost every area of life. As a result of this, there is a global shortage of engineers and an ever growing demand for highly-qualified graduates, practitioners, teachers and researchers who can use their knowledge creatively to address some of today’s

most pressing issues. These include the environment, biomedical technology, the infrastructures that support our cities, the virtual world of computing and information technology, even the world of elite sports.

The faculty and institute are both areas on campus which outsiders tend to equate with hard-core kit – machinery with grunt, a web of computers, and finely calibrated instruments. Yet talk to the heads of both about priorities and needs and that equipment, vital though it is, is trumped by people.

“The single most important thing is the quality of people you attract.” Auckland Bioengineering Institute’s Director, Professor Peter Hunter, is unequivocal.

“If we haven’t got people, what’s the point of having kit?” agrees Professor Michael Davies, Dean of Engineering. “Obviously we want good kit,” he adds, “but the ideas that drive research come from people. Then you have to find the equipment.”

Attracting and retaining the right people may have always headed any list of priorities, but it is particularly true today. Fierce competition for the best and brightest is international and includes academic leaders at the top of their field, early career and middle ranking lecturers and researchers, and students – graduate and postgraduate.

Finding ways to support postgraduate students in particular is vital. Dr David Budgett, senior research fellow at Bioengineering, sees them as part of the Institute’s research and innovation engine and regards funding for them as a big issue. The institute currently has 60 postgraduate students and could accommodate 20 more in 2010 if there was the necessary support. Financial help plays an increasing role in attracting the best students, not just from Auckland but from beyond the city, as well as from other countries.

In the Department of Mechanical Engineering, international student Yao Yao (Fiona) Zhao has just completed her PhD on intelligent processing planning in manufacturing systems and data modelling with the help of the first Auckland University Engineers’ Association (AUEA) Braithwaite-Thompson Graduate Research Award. Set up by alumnus Ray Thompson (BE 1956, BSc 1960) who got a scholarship to go to the United States for his masters and experienced the difficulties of being an international student, the award paid half of Fiona’s first-year tuition fees “and it definitely helped me get going” she says. The award also had an unexpected benefit for Fiona. With her family

back in Beijing, the Thompsons invited Fiona to visit them at Christmas that first year. Those visits have continued, together with the scholarship’s succeeding recipients. Now the Thompsons have become much more than anonymous donors. “I keep in contact and I tell them everything, not just about my research but about the rest of my life. They always say, ‘If you need any help, we are here for you.’”

In January 2010, Fiona takes up a guest researcher position at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Washington DC. Eventually she hopes to return to an academic position at The University of Auckland.

At undergraduate level, scholarships and prizes are just as valuable. In September this year Michael McCracken was the inaugural recipient of the Todd Mataga AUEA award. The late Todd Mataga (BE 1984) was the third son of Kay and Des Mataga; and Des and Todd’s brothers, Peter and Jason, are

## “Finding ways to support postgraduate students in particular is vital.”

also graduates of the Faculty of Engineering. The scholarship gave Michael some welcome financial respite in his final year of a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Chemicals and Materials. “Financial help was one of the main reasons for applying for the Mataga,” he says. “I’m from Rotorua and so I have living away costs. A scholarship helps lift the weight of your student loan from your shoulders. I used it to pay off some of mine. To get this scholarship is also a privilege. It’s a memorial to the Mataga’s son.”

Todd Mataga was diagnosed with cancer in 1994 and died later that year. He had recently returned to the Faculty of Engineering and completed his ME shortly before his death.

Finding financial support for masters students is particularly tough and yet very important – they are the potential postgraduates of the future, says David Budgett. The Bioengineering Institute actively promotes graduate student exchanges, bringing international graduates to Auckland and placing local students in companion laboratories overseas to learn techniques and collect data that cannot easily be done here. While technology makes it much easier today to maintain links with colleagues from Europe, the United States and the Britain,

virtual relationships are not enough to create the serendipitous cross-fertilisation which is so important in engineering and science research.

The internationalising of work and performance measures is equally important for academic staff. One of the Dean of Engineering’s people priorities is to attract early and mid-career academics and researchers. One strategy is the introduction of philanthropy-funded faculty fellowships. He sees them as an incentive both to attract people from overseas and provide opportunities for “home-grown” staff. “It is increasingly important that we establish international links with people and research projects,” says Michael Davies. “It enables benchmarking at all different levels. It is part of the same globalisation as competition for good people.”

Although skills and talents come before equipment, Michael admits the distinction is not always clear. “It’s a bit chicken and egg – if you’ve got really good kit, you can attract good people. It’s a form of international currency.”

A good example of the two working in tandem was the arrival earlier this year of a TI-950 TriboIndenter, one of only two new machines in the world that can test any kind of material, including human tissue, down to 10 nanometres (a human hair is 80,000 nanometres wide). It came to the faculty’s Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering at a significantly reduced cost because of Dr Michelle Dickinson who joined the University from the United States in March 2009, and who designed and built the machine.

“This technology is so new we are only just beginning to explore its possibilities,” she says. “I’ve been working in nanotechnology for a long time and for a long time I’d wanted to find a way to work in New Zealand. I saw that you didn’t have a strong hold in nanotechnology. Local companies have really bombarded me since they became aware we have this kind of equipment here.”

Making the connection between research and commercial application is an important part of students’ experience. If there is an objective common to the faculty and the institute, it is to put in place structures and provide an environment that will enable and enhance students’ educational and research experience – to unload all the separate pieces of expertise and specialist knowledge from their silos and allow the creative cross-pollination that sparks new ways of doing things – new discoveries.

# An update on results from the



## Message to alumni

The University of Auckland has a strong, diverse and influential alumni community of over 134,000 alumni, 20 percent of whom live outside New Zealand.

In September/October of last year Colmar Brunton carried out some research with our alumni. The key purpose of the research was to help the University develop an alumni programme that is of interest and delivers benefits and services that our alumni would like.

Our goal is to create a long-term engagement programme that is based on international best practice and that assists our alumni with their ongoing intellectual, professional and social development needs throughout their life, and not just whilst they are students.

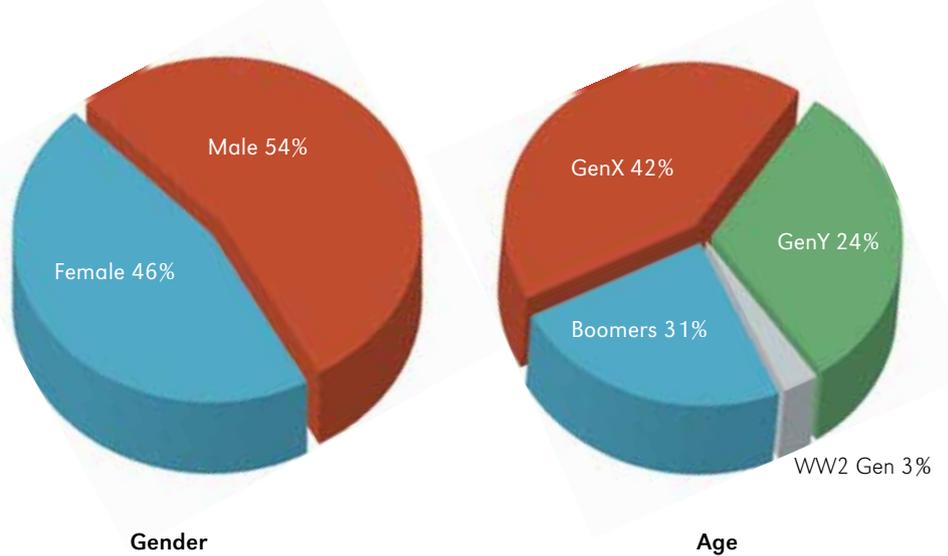
Here is a brief overview of the key research findings and some of the ways in which we are responding.

Finally, I would like to warmly thank each of the 5,314 respondents who participated in either the online Alumni Survey and/or in-depth qualitative interviews for your valuable contribution to this research project.

Keep in touch.

Amanda Lyne  
Alumni Relations Manager

## The alumni community at a glance



- Generation Y (28 years and under)
- Generation X (29-44 year olds)
- Baby Boomers (45-69 year olds)
- WW2 Generation (69 years and up)

## Key findings

### What do alumni think of The University of Auckland?

- Alumni are proud of their qualification and many enjoyed their time at the University.
- Strong advocates: 47 percent are willing to promote the institution, while only 14 percent are likely to speak negatively.



### Communications

- The key touchpoints for alumni remaining connected to the University are publications (*Ingenio*, @auckland and faculty communications).
- Positive news in the media is also a popular way for alumni to stay connected to the University.



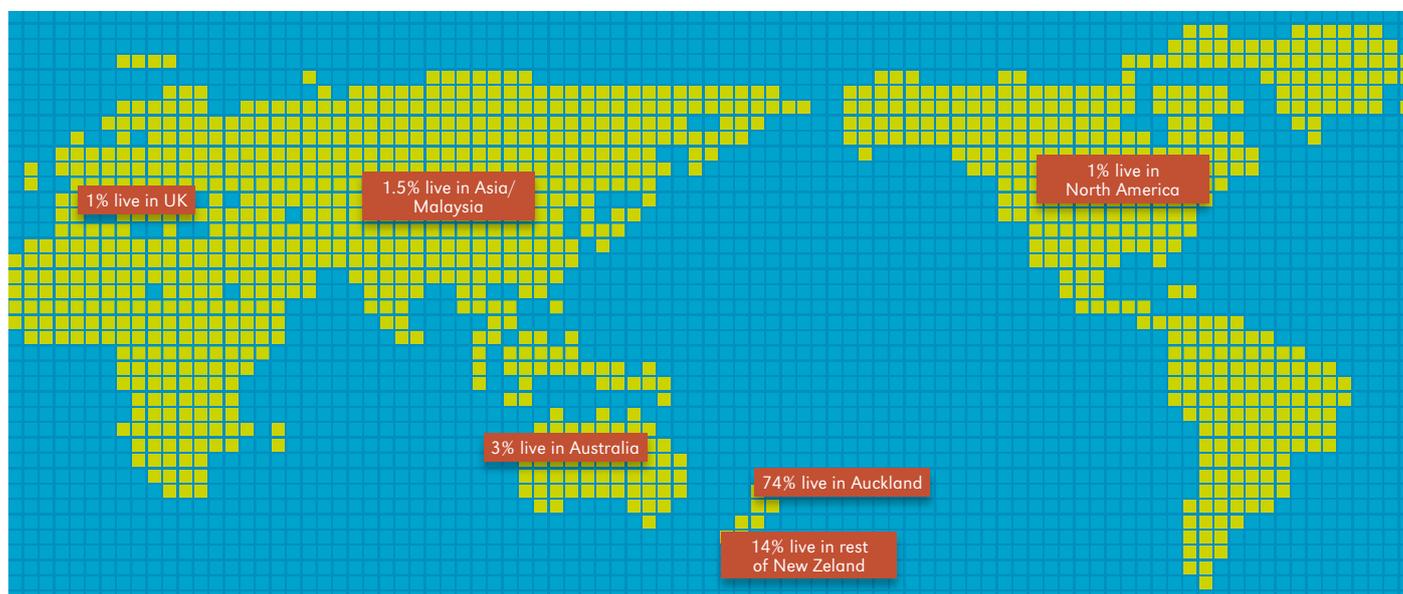


# alumni survey

## Benefits and services

- Only 25 percent are aware of the Alumni Relations Office’s core benefits and services.
- Alumni see value in a number of services but lack of awareness is limiting uptake of these.
- Invitations to events was rated as the most appealing service for all alumni.
- Professional Development and Continuing Education opportunities were the most popular potential services for all alumni.
- Networking opportunities scored highly for all alumni but particularly for alumni based overseas.
- Use of library/research facilities, postgraduate discounts and continuing education opportunities were at the top of the “wish list” for all alumni, but had particular appeal to post-2000 grads.
- For more information on benefits and services for alumni please visit [www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz)

## Where are we all?



Eighty-eight percent of alumni we can reach by post live in New Zealand, with a strong skew towards Auckland (74 percent). Given that over 72,000 alumni live in the Auckland region we will concentrate primarily on benefits and services for Auckland-based alumni although where possible we will be providing these across the board.

## How are we responding?

We have already started using the survey results to shape the alumni programme to better suit the interests and needs of our alumni. So far, the most significant developments include:

### Launching and exploring a suite of new benefits and services for alumni (particularly Auckland-based alumni) and promoting them to alumni. These include:

- offering a 30 percent Library membership discount for Auckland-based alumni
- providing more events for Auckland-based alumni, including targeted events, such as professional development and sport-related events
- informing alumni of relevant University events run by faculties/departments
- negotiating alumni discounts to relevant events run by partner organisations
- providing more relevant content in communications to alumni in particular for younger graduates
- providing more local networking opportunities for international and nationally-based alumni

- providing more support for volunteers
- providing podcasts of relevant and interesting research lectures on the web
- providing social networking opportunities for alumni online.

### New benefits/services we plan to offer in the near future include:

- email for life
- new affinity opportunities such as a discounted alumni insurance programme.

### Your feedback is valuable!

If you didn't participate in last year's electronic alumni survey but would like to have your say, we invite you to complete the alumni questionnaire inserted with the *What's New* form, and return it in the reply paid envelope by 31 January 2010.

**Please note** we have posted the questionnaire only to alumni who were not invited to participate in the electronic survey. If you haven't received a hard copy of the questionnaire but would like to complete it online please visit [www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/uaa/survey](http://www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/uaa/survey)

# Young alumni going places

Every year some 10,000 students graduate from The University of Auckland. For many of these the University is a springboard to an exciting career in some far-flung corner of the world. *Ingenio* tracked down six young alumni working in different parts of the globe.

## Afghanistan

When alumna Katia Hayes (McChB 2006) was deployed to Afghanistan as an officer and general practitioner with the New Zealand Army in 2008, it was a dream come true.

"Deployment is our ultimate goal in the army," says the 28-year-old who grew up in Whangārei. "We train for this. We live for this. To deploy overseas with the New Zealand Army and do something positive for another country, to help them rebuild their leadership, communities and infrastructure is rewarding work."

After completing her Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery in 2005, Katia worked for a year and a half at Auckland Hospital as a house surgeon. "However, I began to get dissatisfied with my job," she remembers. "I needed to get out. Do something different. Have an adventure, a new challenge."

She had joined the Army Territorial Force while at university and then in 2007 the New Zealand Army offered her a job. "It meant moving to Palmerston North and doing general practice at our Linton Military Camp, but I was up for that."

Within six months Katia was off on her first overseas deployment to Afghanistan with the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The PRT, whose main focus is redevelopment, leadership and security, is based in Bamyan Province in the central north highlands of Afghanistan at an altitude of 2400 metres, which brings severe extremes of weather. Katia spent six months with the PRT looking after the health and wellbeing of 140 officers and soldiers

"We also employed 60 locals within our camp, so their illnesses kept me and my team busy." Katia's team consisted of a nurse, a senior medic and an environmental health technician; she also had professional control of four medics based within four patrols.

While in Afghanistan Katia became involved in setting up and running teaching programmes for local Afghan health professionals. She made contact with the American doctors at a nearby base and



utilised their specialist skills and expertise to help train the local doctors, nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants. After liaising with the clinic staff and the NGOs that managed and funded the hospitals and clinics within Bamyan, she developed a programme teaching about relevant illnesses and injuries such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, HIV, obstetric emergencies, neonatal resuscitation, treatment of burns, psychiatry, and also on laboratory testing.

“Bamyan Province has the highest maternal death rate in Afghanistan, and Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal death rates in the world, so teaching about obstetric emergencies was very important,” she says.

Katia got involved in medical projects for the area such as applying for funding for ambulances and radios so these remote clinics could actually communicate and transport their women in labour to higher levels of medical care.

“And of course I was always ready and prepared for any potential incidents that just one day might include any of our NZ personnel,” says Katia

“I wasn’t there changing the world,” she says of her time in Afghanistan, “just taking little steps at a time to try and do good for other people. The New Zealand Defence Force has made so many positive changes in Afghanistan, it’s so good to be part of that work. The local people are lovely and gentle, and so thankful for the work we are doing in their province. I was only one member of a 140-person strong team, we all just do our bit to help Afghanistan.”

Katia returned to Waiouru Military Camp at the end of 2008 and was promoted to Senior Medical Officer. In October this year she left on a second deployment to Afghanistan. When she returns in January she will transfer from the Regular Force to the Territorials in order to train as an anaesthetist at Waikato Hospital – so that hopefully one day she can return to a war-zone “real battlefield trauma work”.

“I’ve had two and a half years of challenging, busy times in the military,” she concludes. “It just hasn’t stopped. It’s been the best decision joining the Army!”

## Malaysia

In April, 2007 alumnus Senthil Balan Da (BCom 2000) left his role at Malaysian Airlines in Kuala Lumpur where he was focused on turning around a US\$500 million



loss, to help establish the world’s first long-haul, low-cost airline.

“I walked into an empty office with fewer than ten staff,” remembers the 32-year-old, who is now the Head of Network Management for AirAsia X.

“Over the next six months we worked our socks off to obtain our first aircraft, secure equity investment, obtain regulatory approvals in Malaysia and Australia, and launch our first flight into the Gold Coast in November 2007. It was an amazing ride filled with high octane drama, adventure, fun, excitement and lots of hard work.”

Partly owned by Richard Branson’s Virgin Group and the AirAsia group (Asia’s largest low-cost short-haul airline), AirAsia X now operates into seven, long haul destinations: Stansted (England), Melbourne, Perth, the Gold Coast, Taipei, Tianjin (near Beijing), Hangzhou (near Shanghai) and is about to launch into the United Arab Emirates and Chengdu in China.

Based at the low-cost terminal in Kuala Lumpur, Senthil’s typical working day starts at 8am and ends at 10pm. On some days when there are operational issues, Senthil and the entire AirAsiaX team, including the CEO, will head to the check-in counter or even carry bags to help out colleagues in need. “My role puts me in charge of route planning, bilateral management, negotiating with airports and tourism authorities, regulatory licensing, plus fleet and schedule management for the entire

airline, but we are all encouraged to help out in other areas when there is a need.

“Another typical day which happens 60 percent of the time is to get on a plane to a different continent every two weeks and negotiate with countries as far afield as the US, Korea, Japan, the Middle East, India, Europe and even Africa hunting down new routes and attractive deals that can support our route economics. Our aim is to fly to over 40 destinations within five years.

“There is never a dull period for the airline business. Last year we were managing volatile and mostly high fuel prices, while this year, we are dealing with the economic crisis, H1N1 flu, and the global credit crunch.

“Next year, there are plans to launch into India, Japan, South Korea and potentially New Zealand. I was in New Zealand in September,” he adds, “and we are considering flying into Auckland and Christchurch in 2010 which will be a very personally rewarding moment for me if it can happen.”

Born in Kuala Lumpur, Senthil attended Christ’s College in Christchurch for his sixth and seventh form years and then enrolled at The University of Auckland majoring in Accounting and International Business for his BCom. While on campus he was treasurer for the Auckland University Students’ Association (AUSA) and President of the Union of Malaysian Students in Auckland in 1997.

“The University not only offered me excellent academic teaching, it also offered

tremendous extra-curricular activities which helped give me an all-round education.” he says. “Even today the lessons I learnt then have helped in managing many challenges and opportunities.”

## Vancouver

When University of Auckland graduate architect, Andrea Duncan (BArch 2006) arrived in Vancouver two years ago looking for a job all she had was the name of a friend’s uncle who was a quantity surveyor in the city.

“He suggested a few architecture firms he’d worked with,” remembers Andrea.

One of those was McFarland Marceau Architects ([www.mmal.ca](http://www.mmal.ca)) – a small office specialising in institutional buildings and sustainable design.

“I contacted the firm and I guess the timing was right: they had a new project on designing an environmental learning centre in Paradise Valley and a staff member was about to take a year of maternity leave.”

Before she knew it Andrea had a job and was working on the design team for the North Vancouver Outdoor School situated on 420 acres of designated ecological reserve – home to the largest recorded concentration of wintering bald eagles in North America, as well as the Dave Marshall Salmon Reserve, the centre of federally designated habitat and spawning channels for five species of Pacific salmon.

“It is exciting to work on a project that is at the leading edge of sustainable design,” she tells *Ingenio* in an email from Vancouver. “We have completed the Master Plan for the renewal of the site’s facilities and are

currently preparing the working drawings for the first building to be constructed: the Environmental Learning Centre. The vision for the project is to create a living building with net-zero carbon emissions and net-zero energy use. The building itself will be a learning tool to educate students and visitors about renewable energy and environmentally friendly construction.”

Andrea is also working on an “Energy House” (a centre for the demonstration and education of renewable energy technologies) for Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek, British Columbia. “It will be a net producer of energy with a functioning wind turbine, photovoltaic array and ground source ge-exchange system” she explains.

Andrea, 28, lives in Vancouver with her husband alumnus Richard Davison (BArch 2006), and says the west coast Canadian city is a very environmentally-conscious place.

“The Green Building Councils are active nationally and regionally, LEED-rated (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings are now commonplace, and local and provincial governments are committing to LEED-rated buildings in all future projects. The office I am working for achieved the first LEED platinum rating in Canada.”

Andrea says she hopes to be able to use her experience when she returns to Auckland [in a few years] to help New Zealand move forward to a more sustainable future.

“I may even return to The University of Auckland to do a Master of Architecture in sustainable design,” she muses. “Seeing books on sustainable design written by professors from the University’s School of Architecture on the shelves of the Vancouver Public Library has reinforced for me that it truly is a world-class degree.

“What I love about my life here is that living ‘green’ has started to permeate into all aspects of my life. I don’t own a car, instead walking 15 minutes through the tree-lined streets to work and taking public transport to get around the city. I buy locally grown fruit and vegetables from the Granville Island Public Market – an icon in Vancouver – and local organic and free-run meats from the local butcher two blocks away, and I work out at my gym, also two blocks walk from home. Vancouver is a great place for outdoor activities, with three ski slopes only 20 minutes from downtown, Stanley Park – a huge 400-hectare forest located directly adjacent to the downtown area – and many kilometres of scenic seawall to walk and run along.

“I look forward to returning home with an environmental conscience, and living with the challenges that Auckland faces in becoming a more sustainable city – and hopefully making a difference in some way.”

## Britain

Ten years as a fighter pilot in both New Zealand and Britain is paying dividends for engineering alumnus Glen Willcox (BE 1996, ME 1998).

He is one of only three from the British Royal Air Force (RAF) recently selected to train as a test pilot – an elite role which involves testing the manoeuvrability and capabilities of new aircraft and technologies before they go into service.

The role of RAF test pilot is not given lightly. Glen was sent to the prestigious EPNER flying school in France, at a cost of one million pounds per student, to prepare for the position. There he learnt how to fly more than 30 different aircraft, from the Airbus right through to Mirage 2000 fighters, even the Learjet and Canadair sea planes.

Glen graduated from EPNER in July and his first major task as an RAF test pilot will be to conduct flight trials of new maritime reconnaissance aircraft, which are equipped with technologies not seen in the field before.

“One of the objects of test flying is to find any potential problems before the front-line crews find themselves in a difficult situation,” Glen explains on the phone from Britain.

“Anytime you fly it is potentially dangerous – especially when you are doing things that haven’t been tried before. But the preparation and training are so intense, the risk is reduced as much as possible.”

Glen pursued his passion for flying by joining the Royal New Zealand Air Force in





1999 soon after completing his Master of Engineering. His dream was cut short less than a year later when the New Zealand Government axed pilots in strike roles. Luckily Glen was one of 16 New Zealand pilots to transfer to Britain under a Commonwealth scheme. He has since served on ten tours of duty with the RAF, including to Iraq and Afghanistan. As an aircraft commander he captured a crew of 12 around the world in both hostile and friendly environments.

Glen says his Engineering degrees were the ideal grounding for a role that requires advanced technical, mathematical and mechanical knowledge, as well as the ability to be a manager and leader. He is one of three Willcox siblings to study at the University. All have gone on to incredible success. Glen's elder sister Karen, also an Engineering graduate, is a Professor at MIT in the United States and this year made NASA's astronaut shortlist. His youngest sister Bobby is a PhD student in the Department of Statistics and an analyst for the Silver Ferns national netball team.

## Sarajevo

“They killed 8000 people, all male, aged seven to 77. That part was terrible, when I worked on cases where three generations of one family were killed: father, son, and grandson. Sometimes I felt like crying, and sometimes I cried as not only was the whole story tragic, they were my

people killed with no reason whatsoever.”

This is the voice of alumna Seila Kapetanovic (BSc 2006) who in January 2007 got a job as a junior osteologist in the forensic department of the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP) in Sarajevo.

Born in Bosnia, Seila came to New Zealand with her family five years after the civil war ended (she was in Sarajevo during the war). She returned to Sarajevo after completing her degree in Biological Sciences to be with her boyfriend (now husband) and got the osteology job despite no direct experience.

“It took me about a month to learn every single bone in the human body,” she says.

Seila was based at the Lucama Reassociation Centre and her job included processing newly excavated graves from the 1995 Srebrenica genocide.

“The problem of identification was big, as the Bosnian Serb perpetrators excavated primary mass graves just after the war and made small secondary and tertiary graves. Because all those people were already in the process of decomposition, they became commingled.”

The first task was to find and put together an individual and then identify them.

“Sometime the bones of one individual were recovered from more than seven different graves. This meant that we found one individual's leg in one grave, then 50 kilometres away we would find their head and so on. I became very good in identifying one individual out of many bones. Of course

this had to be confirmed by DNA, but as DNA tests are expensive I tried to minimise DNA testing by identifying at least one body part. Some of our cases [storage containers] were really big and could contain up to 50 individuals represented by only one bone. It was like a puzzle really. And I only worked with bones.”

Once Seila had prepared an individual's bones for anthropological examination she tried to determine the sex and age of that individual.

“I also tried to find any anti-mortem characteristics such as healed fractures, unusual dentitions or any mark that could help in the identification process. I took a photo of every case as each was used as evidence for the ICTY [International Crime Tribunal for former Yugoslavia].”

“The other part of my job was receiving DNA profiles. I had to find all the bones that belonged to the same individual, and then proceed to a process called ‘reassociation’ (including physical and virtual databases) which meant I had to take all the bones and place them in anatomical order, check the age and the sex of the individual, and make sure that only one individual was represented. This was then checked by my co-workers.”

For Seila the osteology work was challenging but grim. “It was not the kind of job where you can feel satisfied at the end of the work day. Realistically I felt like we were awakening old wounds and it was kind of hard



to work on it, as I am Bosnian and I also went through the war. I was just one of the lucky ones who survived."

A positive outcome of the job, however, was that Seila pioneered a new technique for estimating age from teeth. "As we measured transparency of a tooth in order to estimate age, I realised that transparency is represented differently if you measure from different sides of the tooth [labial, mesial and distal]." Starting with the traditional Lamendin method for estimating age from teeth by measuring from the labial side, Seila took two additional measurements: distal and mesial. "After statistical analysis of data we came to the conclusion that the measurement from the labial was giving false data for individuals who had died up to 15 or more years ago and that the distal side is the best way for age estimation from teeth, giving very precise age estimation in a big number of examples."

Seila recently presented this work at a forensics seminar in Melbourne and aims to continue her research into measuring age through teeth with the support of the ICMP in Sarajevo.

## Peru

If you told me seven years ago that I would be living in Peru with my wife working for a New Zealand company I would not have believed it," says alumnus Nick Fitzpatrick (BA 1999).

But that's exactly what the 32-year-old French/History major is doing. Based in Lima, he is the General Manager of Delica Ltd's South American office. Delica, a division of

New Zealand company Turners and Growers, is a fresh fruit and vegetable export and marketing company.

"We work with growers/producers from Peru, Chile and Argentina, marketing their fruit and vegetables to various world markets," explains Nick. "Our main business is exporting Peruvian asparagus and table grapes. We also work with avocados and citrus from Peru. From Chile we are exporting cherries and grapes and from Argentina blueberries. Most of the business is to our client base in Asia where Delica is very strong due to our experience working with these markets from our New Zealand and Australian offices."

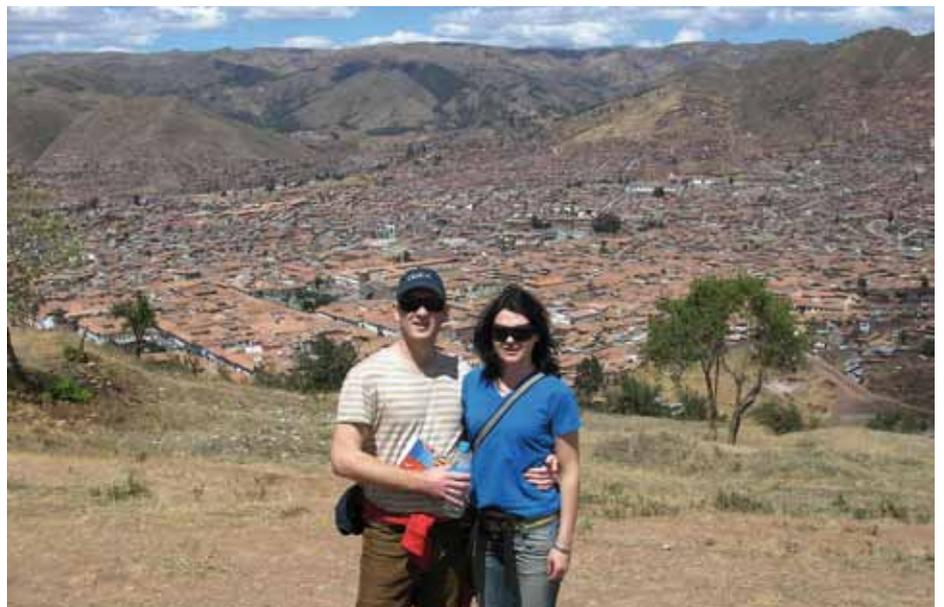
Nick says there is no such thing as a typical

day in his job. "It could be spent in a growing area visiting farms, auditing a packhouse to comply with United Kingdom market requirements, meeting clients in a wholesale fruit market in China, or organising shipment documents and freight payments in the office. What I love most about my job is this constant mix of activities and communication with a wide variety of countries and cultures."

Nick spends 50 percent of his day speaking Spanish, and the rest in English with a little French. "Being able to work in another language is particularly fulfilling for me as I spent four years at the University studying French and Spanish; my Latin American Studies papers and history in general have been very useful in my work," he adds.

Nick lives in the seaside suburb of Miraflores with his wife, University alumna Sarah Lindberg (BSc 1998, PGDipSc 2001, MPlanPrac 2001). Sarah is currently working part-time for an environmental consultancy, and doing some correspondence papers on environmental economics.

"Living in Lima, is not easy," says Nick. "It is large, overcrowded, poor and polluted; however it is a great challenge that we are sure is going to give us many great memories in the future, and already feel it has enriched our lives. We particularly enjoy the Peruvian cuisine, especially the seafood, which is an obsession in Lima, and the travel opportunities are endless. We have visited the Andes and Peruvian Amazon, and this year trips to Colombia and Brazil are on the agenda. We have made some great friends too, the people are generally very modest and optimistic, and the cultural contact is particularly fulfilling."





The University's newest "Golden Graduates" who graduated in the late 1950s.

PHOTO: BOJANA STOJADINOVIC

# Golden Graduates remember

Close to 400 turned out for this year's "Golden Graduates" event in September, many bringing memories of a university that was very different from today's. In the late 1950s the roll stood at 4000, compared with a figure approaching 40,000 now.

Even our newest Golden Graduates, who graduated 50 years ago, in 1959, could remember back to when The University of Auckland was not The University of Auckland, but a college within the University of New Zealand. The new name came into use in the late 1950s but it wasn't until January 1962 that we became The University of Auckland in law as well as in name.

Emeritus Professor Dick Bellamy, former Dean of Science, shared his memories of student life in the late 1950s when he was "a naive young student straight from school.

"The engineers and their equipment were still out at Ardmore; business courses were largely run as night classes at the Technical Institute; Law was but a part-time degree. A corrugated fence separated the University from the beautiful grounds of Government House, and occasionally the Governor-General and even the Queen herself resided on site," he recalled. "The library still occupied a section of the Clock Tower building. The Central Police Station was sited uncomfortably close by, roughly where the students' cafeteria is now."

The fashion essentials of the day were corduroys for boys and twin sets and pearls for girls. He remembered fondly the Harris

tweed jacket bought for him by his mother to wear to University. "In Botany lectures we males were admonished if we did not wear a tie. The lecturers of course all wore gowns!"

The master of ceremonies, Director of External Relations John Taylor, noted that the Golden Graduates event had drawn even greater numbers than in previous years, with this year's "senior prefects" led by Dame Dorothy Winstone, who first graduated in 1942, and Monica Asher, Beryl Green and Dorothy Hutchinson, who graduated in 1943.

"You have come from Cairns, Omapere, Kaikohe, Kerikeri, Mangawhai, Whangarei, Warkworth, Thames, Te Puke, Hamilton, Rotorua, Whangamata, Whakatane, Napier, New Plymouth, Wanganui, and Wellington, as well as Greater Auckland."

Although most of the guests graduated 50 or more years ago, others were latecomers to university study. "When I left school in 1956 girls did not go to university unless they were considered very bright and/or had lots of money," said Jennie Oakley. Going to university one day was always a dream and in 2005 she graduated with a BA. "I have never stopped smiling since attending the New Start lectures in 2000," she said. "My aim now is to give back to the University as much as I can physically and emotionally."

Jennie works in the Short Loan Library every weekday morning and is on the executive committee of The University of Auckland Society. Last month she received news of a B+ pass for her MA thesis.

John Heynen also took up study late in

life, to "bury his sorrow" following the death of his wife and after a hectic life in business which left little time for spiritual development, he was capped in 1999 with a Bachelor of Theology, aged 68. "It's always so nice to be together with a bunch of like-minded people and enjoy other people's gifts," he said after the Golden Graduates event.

One of the highlights of the day was the performance by the University's Chamber Choir, directed by Associate Professor Karen Grylls. "I enjoyed the focus on music," wrote Dr Diane Hebley, who holds a BA (1958) and an MA(Hons) (1959), after the event. "It's one of the major passions of my life."

Georgina Zellan-Smith, MNZM, a concert pianist who has a long association with the School of Music, described the performance as "delightful".

Guest speaker Professor John Montgomery, Director of the South Pacific Centre for Marine Science, intrigued the audience with his presentation on the scientific, educational and economic significance of the University's marine science campus at Leigh, north of Auckland.

"The remarks from the Vice-Chancellor about feeling positive about Auckland were excellent," wrote Georgina Zellan-Smith. "The University itself has such a history, with so much to give." Helen Borne

✳ You can view a gallery of more than 50 Golden Graduates photos on our Alumni and Friends website. Please go to: [www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/goldengraduatesday](http://www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/goldengraduatesday)

# Re-inventing our history

When a new breed of historians took to the stage at this year's Winter Lecture series suggesting it was time to revisit and rewrite New Zealand history, they were applauded by record-sized audiences. Margo White talks to two of the prime movers.

PHOTOS: KATHRYN ROBINSON

"I'm a cultural historian and I have a mission to inject some fun into the country's past," says Associate Professor of History, Caroline Daley.

Evidently she and her colleagues in the University's Department of History are doing something right, judging by the numbers who turned up for this year's Winter Lecture series in which New Zealand historiography was shown to be going deeper, taking off in sideways directions, more localised and more internationalist...the past never did suit a straightforward narrative.

The theme for the series was "Writing New Zealand History in the 21st century" and the title of Caroline's opening was: "Taking off the Black Singlet", with the familiar woollen garment held up as emblematic of a particularly no-frills, rural and masculine version of the past. As she noted in her opening address, the black singlet is "the woollen equivalent of number eight fencing wire" but, to continue the sartorial metaphor, it has strait-jacketed the way New Zealand's past has been interpreted.

Caroline identifies three particularly influential books as responsible; William

Pember Reeves' *Aotearoa: The Land of the Long White Cloud*, Keith Sinclair's *A History of New Zealand* and more recently, Michael King's bestseller, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. All are narratives of the nation, in which New Zealand was presented as a progressive, egalitarian and democratic country populated by good-hearted, practical, commonsensical and tolerant people. This view might be reassuring, says Caroline, but it's also "deeply conservative". The former books were of their time but Caroline argues that King's book, published 50 years after Sinclair's, perpetuates outdated ideas.

"And there are almost no women," she adds. "Despite 30 plus years of feminist scholarship, it [King's book] makes almost no impact on this retelling of New Zealand history. I'm not talking about bra-burning and fiery polemical stuff, but there's been a whole lot of work in history around women, around family, around paid work – all these massive changes in the 20th century – that aren't part of the national story. That absence is deeply concerning."

But King's book was written as a populist history, and always was going to involve

broad-brush strokes rather than a nuanced or particularised approach. Yes, agrees Caroline, but the popularity of the book – it has been one of the most popular non-fiction titles in recent years – has repercussions. "It's the entrenching of the ideas," says Caroline. "Because the book has been so popular, whole new generations are getting these sorts of ideas. A whole lot of new things have happened in New Zealand histories that aren't getting out there."

She isn't, she adds, singling King out as a whipping boy, but his book does represent a particularly populist view of the past, and an opportunity missed. "It's the biggest history book that has come out in recent years. So when he ignores social cultural history, and he ignores women, you get the impression that those things don't matter. But they do to those of us who research and teach New Zealand history, and they have for a long time."

Caroline and colleagues presented a wide range of topics in the Winter series, all of which were linked by their call for a reinterpretation of the "big picture", and a new approach to New Zealand history. Any framework that orientated around the "big

picture” – the history of a nation – excludes a lot of lives. Women and Māori are invariably reduced to a few guest appearances. And by focusing on the national, history ends up neglecting the local, as well as New Zealand’s connection with people and places overseas.

In other words, there might have been many “men alone” out there taming the land, but there were other people around at the time too. Some of our ancestors were women. Not all of them were European. Many lived in towns and cities rather than on farms, loved shopping, followed the latest fashions overseas and sometimes preferred sequins to black scratchy wool. Contrary to popular perception, early 20th century life in New Zealand might not have even been as dour and puritanical as we’re often led to believe, nor was it necessarily 20 years behind the times.

“When and with what?” asks Caroline. “What are you comparing New Zealand with when you say that? You’re comparing it with London or New York. You’re not comparing it with Birmingham, or with Devon. What’s motivating us to do that? So we feel better about the present? That we’re better now?”

As Caroline’s research has shown, not all our female ancestors were spearheading the temperance movement; many of our great-great grandmothers were flocking to get an eye-full of the exposed buttocks of the Prussian strongman who visited New Zealand for some weeks early last century. As she has already detailed in her book *Leisure & Pleasure*, Eugen Sandow came to the country in supposedly puritanical times – yet attracted sell-out, and often swooning audiences.

Even then, people enjoyed the sight of a good body on display. Around the same time there were male beauty contests as part of vaudevillian repertoire or as a regular feature of local carnivals and fetes. During World War One, male beauty contests raised money for soldiers. Later they were held to raise masculine egos. As to what New Zealanders considered the perfect bloke in the first decade of the 20th century? Five foot six inches, with a 36-inch chest and a 32-inch waist. “Not quite the giant we might imagine,” says Caroline. “But then, we don’t imagine that men in the early 20th century entered beauty contests.”

The Winter Lecture series was wrapped up by Caroline’s colleague, Dr Deborah Montgomerie, a senior lecturer in the Department of History who has also written several books around the theme of gender and war, such as *Love in the Time of War: Letter Writing in the Second World War* and

*The Women’s War: New Zealand Women 1939-1945*. (She also collaborated with Caroline on their book, *The Gendered Kiwi*.)

Deborah too is wary of nationalistic narratives, particularly those that present a view of New Zealand that is somehow exceptional: “National histories will continue to be written,” she said at the end of her lecture, “but nationalist histories are beginning to look tired, smack of exceptionalism and try-hardism, that greatest little country in the world syndrome that is so easy to parody.”

Deborah’s lecture looked at the way war is constructed as part of the nationalist identity. New Zealand soldiers were often represented as punching above their weight. New Zealand was said to have sent a disproportionately higher number of troops than other countries. Both claims make New Zealanders sound exceptional, but both are highly debatable.

There’s also the idea of the laconic, inarticulate New Zealand man who became even more inarticulate after the war – a notion which is contradicted by the thousands of letters written during both wars. “In the rush leading up to Christmas in 1941, New Zealanders sent 15,000 bags of mail to the Middle East. In January, another 9000 bags arrived. Soldiers didn’t send as much, but they still sent massive amounts of letters.”

Many returning soldiers also wrote memoirs. What do their personal writings reveal to an historian about the war? “You start to write a lot more about male vulnerability,” says Deborah. “We all know that war was very disruptive of family, but it also made people very aware of what was important in their life. And if they survived, many of them wrote about how much they value family and home. They made me much more aware of men as active participants in family formation.”

This undercuts the longstanding idea that lots of men once they got home, struggled to settle down. “Many actively sought marriage and domesticity...I’ve got these archives of men writing about how much they miss the family, they are talking about wishing they could rattle their mother’s biscuit tin, they’re asking if the kids are doing the dishes. And the nicknames they use, like Freckles and McNuisance, are not the sort of nicknames used by people who are disengaged from their kids.”

The concept of nation can provide an analytical tool that helps frame the picture in certain ways and can be useful, she says, but a nationalistic narrative of history tends to leave a lot out. Aucklanders, she notes, are “peculiarly absent from the nationalistic history” because cosmopolitan urban-dwellers don’t fit in with the popular version of what constitutes a typical New Zealander. “Not in terms of nationalist iconography,” says Deborah. “Typical New Zealanders are still thought to have some farming experience and play rugby. They don’t spend their spare time in St Lukes browsing through Glassons.”

Both Deborah and Caroline argue that most New Zealanders aren’t necessarily exceptional, not particularly unique, and never lived a “destiny apart”. However, ordinary lives are still interesting, and provide rich pickings for historians. Says Caroline: “I have been uncomfortable with these notions of nationalism before it was trendy to be uncomfortable with them. I’m interested in the everyday people. I’m not interested in the extraordinary. If I think about my own history it’s about health, family, job, where you live. It’s the mundane that defines us.”

✿ To listen to the Winter Lecture series go to <http://tinyurl.com/yj3r5qj>



Caroline Daley.

# Opus magnum complete

Two former University academics have completed one of the most important translations in the **history of medicine**. Tess Redgrave finds out more.

Of “all the constituents of the human body, bone is the hardest, the driest, the earthiest, and the oldest; and excepting only the teeth, it is devoid of sensation...for in the fabric of the human body, bones perform the same function as do walls and beams in houses, poles in tents, and keels and ribs in boats ...”

So wrote Andreas Vesalius in the first chapter of his ground-breaking book *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (On the fabric of the human body) published in 1543.

Considered one of the most important books in the history of medicine, *De fabrica* revolutionised the science of anatomy and the way it was taught. Incorporating seven books – sections as we would now call them – and illustrated with hundreds of anatomical drawings from artists at the school of Italian Renaissance painter, Titian, *De fabrica* led to the eventual overturn of the Galenic system that had dominated medical science for 14 centuries.

Yet most of us would not be able to understand a word of Vesalius’s Latin prose, nor appreciate his literary and “often moving” writing if it wasn’t for two former University of Auckland academics.

In 1989, alumnus and Senior Lecturer in Classics, Will Richardson (BA 1960, MA 1961, PhD 1977) and the School of Medicine’s founding Professor of Anatomy (now Emeritus Professor), John Carman began working in tandem to create the first English translation of Vesalius’s book (the only other translation had been into Russian in 1954-56). Now 20 years later, their fifth and final volume has been published by Norman Publishing in San Francisco.

But the pair’s work has already received international accolades. “Until now, Vesalius has not been well served by translators,” said a review in the prestigious *Nature* magazine in 1998. “Some lacked linguistic competence, others anatomical expertise. But, in what must rank as one of the publishing and scientific and literary achievements of the decade, classicist William Richardson, in collaboration with anatomist John Carman, have produced a quite stunning translation of the first book of *De fabrica: The Bones and Cartilages*.”



In 2003, after publication of Volume 3 on the vessels and nerves, the Auckland academics’ work was hailed in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* for presenting Vesalius “beautifully and harmoniously”.

For John Carman serendipity has played a big part in the success of the project.

Not all University libraries will have Vesalius’s original tome, he points out. “But Harry Erlam [the then School of Medicine’s librarian] bought a facsimile of the original *De fabrica* in 1967. I then came here as the founding professor in 1968 while Will had joined the Classics Department in 1963.

In the 1970s Will began studying the origin of anatomical terms in Latin and Greek for his PhD and consulted closely with John. Subsequently, medical researchers delving into Vesalius’s book asked Will to translate short sections of *de Fabrica* relevant to their own studies. Realising there was no translation into an accessible modern language Will decided to embark on a translation into English and asked John to join him.

“It was remarkable that a classicist who specialised in scientific Renaissance Latin and an anatomist who had known about Vesalius since I was a student and was very keen on anatomical description should come



together in the same university,” says John. “We brought a range of interests and skills to the project and we got tremendous personal pleasure from doing this.”

The two scholars followed a careful process: Will translated “about a page a day” from the original tome – a huge book weighing 5.5kg which he placed on a customised, slanted stand – and then John checked the anatomical terminology and descriptions.

“Will’s translation was so accurate that I could follow Vesalius’s line of thought and if it wandered off I would question if there was something wrong with the translation or not,” explains John. “We’d then look at it together. Our version had to first be consistent with good Latin and then with good anatomy.” Moreover, their aim throughout was to let Vesalius speak for himself, uninterrupted by explanation, interpretation or inclusion of modern terms.

Translator’s notes at the end of each chapter, and after illustrations, provided lists matching Vesalius’s usages to modern terminology and gave details of his numerous, though often brief, references to the ancient literature. For John, preparing the lists of modern names for the vessels and nerves was “the hardest thing I have ever had to do”.

By 2004 the pair had published three

Far left: Andreas Vesalius (portrait from *De fabrica*).  
 Left: Table II of Muscles from *De fabrica*.  
 Right: The title page of the original *De fabrica*.  
 Far right: Volume V of the *De fabrica* translation.

volumes of *De fabrica* and Will had completed the translations for the last two volumes. However, in October 2004, Will died very suddenly.

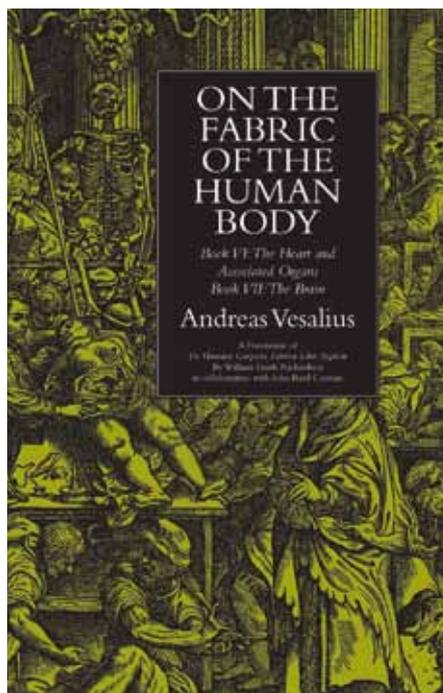
"That was a big blow," says John. "In antique road shows they often ask if an item is one of a matching pair and say how much more valuable the two together would be. We were a matching pair and I miss my colleague greatly."

John completed the editing of the last two volumes with help from Classics Senior Lecturer, Bill Barnes. Today he sees the completed translation not only as of great value in the field of anatomy and its history but also, as Will appreciated, as an important resource for researchers in social history and the history of medicine.

"The section on bones is virtually identical with what's in modern textbooks," says John. "The account of the abdominal organs would be suitable as an introduction for students; the accounts of the thorax and the brain are good; that of the muscles is excellent, but the lack of modern terminology here, and in the case of the vessels and nerves, would make these sections very difficult to use today."

As John and Will worked on *De fabrica* they realised how gifted Vesalius was. "Will found him a superb Latinist and he was undoubtedly a superb anatomist," says John.

Born in Brussels in 1514, Andreas Vesalius studied medicine at the University of Leuven



and then the University of Paris. After receiving his doctorate at the University of Padua, he took up that university's chair of surgery and anatomy. He soon revolutionised the study of anatomy by performing "hands on" human dissections rather than the usual practice of reading aloud from ancient texts while a demonstrator did the dissection. In 1539, a Padua judge interested in Vesalius's work made bodies of executed criminals available for public dissections.

"Extraordinarily there is a diary of one of Vesalius's students, a German, which turned up in Sweden 50 years ago," says John "He writes of how on one occasion Vesalius said: 'I'd like to show you this but this body's really got too dry. We'll have another one this afternoon.' The students looked out the window and there was the body on the scaffolding.

"I've counted 14 different dissections Vesalius refers to in the book (section) on the abdomen and pelvis," says John. "It seems likely that he dissected as many as 30 or 40 bodies, perhaps more."

After the publication of *De fabrica*, Vesalius became the imperial physician to the court of Emperor Charles V and then to his son Philip II who rewarded him with a life pension. In 1564 Vesalius died in a shipwreck off the coast of Greece but his "hands on" approach had already changed the course of anatomy.

"Vesalius was the first anatomist who insisted that you must view the anatomy of a body yourself and not take the word of the ancients," says John Carman.

"It has been seen as a pivotal step in modern science and certainly in anatomy and modern medicine."

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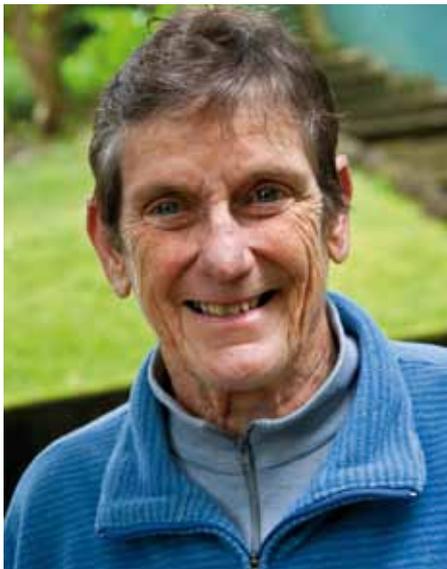
- ✓ Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences upgrade
- ✓ Owen G Glenn Building
- ✓ Population Health Complex Tamaki campus
- ✓ Arts and Commerce Building
- ✓ School of Architecture
- ✓ Recreation Centre
- ✓ Computer Centre
- ✓ Students' Union Building
- ✓ Science Block chemistry teaching wing
- ✓ International House foundations
- ✓ Biology Block
- ✓ Students' Club-house
- ✓ Arts Block Clock Tower



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# New Legacy Society



“I’m not a very wealthy woman. I don’t have a great fortune to bequest. But to me, it is about giving something back to the University,” says alumna Sue Caswell (MA 1992).

Sitting down to discuss what inspired her to make a bequest to The University of Auckland, it quickly becomes apparent that it is a wealth of experience which drives her generosity. To Sue, education has been far more than just a means to a job; it has given her a purpose which spans decades, and with that in mind she is keen to contribute.

Sue is one of a number of generous benefactors who have created bequests to The University of Auckland. In early September this group was honoured as founding members of the Legacy Society at a morning tea, where Vice-Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon – also a founding member – conveyed deep gratitude for their important legacies to learning.

“Some of you see this as a way of contributing towards the social and economic prosperity of your community,” said the Vice-Chancellor. “Others of you will want to see something special and meaningful grow from your own personal financial success. Others again will aspire to give the same help that someone gave you during your own academic or professional careers.”

Unlike many of today’s students, Sue didn’t pursue university studies straight from secondary school. Leaving school in the late 1950s, she worked in her homeland of Australia as a secretary, which was one of the few jobs available to women with no university qualifications. She completed six

papers towards a BA majoring in English at the University of Sydney, but it wasn’t until moving to the South Island with her New Zealand-born husband some years later that she considered finishing her degree.

With little in savings and raising two children on a low income, returning to university was a challenge. There were days when, to save money, Sue hitched a ride with the newspaper truck from her home in Timaru to Canterbury University where she was finishing her final English paper. But with perseverance and the support of her family, she completed her degree and re-entered the workforce as a part-time secondary school teacher in Timaru.

Sue’s teaching career took her family from one part of the country to another and, as far away as Western Samoa where she taught for two years at Samoa College in Apia. Although the experience was greatly rewarding Sue and her family returned to Timaru in 1978 where she started the city’s first adult literacy programme. Later, in 1980, Sue and her family moved to Auckland, where she co-ordinated adult literacy at the Manukau Institute of Technology. In the early 1990s Sue returned to university part-time, this time to complete her Master of Arts in Education at The University of Auckland.

By then in her mid-fifties, Sue had a wealth of personal and work experience to bring to her studies. Her thesis on adult literacy was a qualitative analysis of how confidence instilled through a teaching programme can positively affect a student’s learning.

The national adult literacy programme continues to operate today and through the use of various training techniques can produce remarkable learning outcomes.

Though retired and in her early 70s, Sue is still involved in teaching – now as a volunteer with a community-based ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programme. Education has played a huge part in her life but she says her university experience opened doors more suited to her interests, “changing my whole working life”.

When asked about supporting scholarships Sue is quick to express how crucial they are to ensuring students can focus on their studies without the distraction of financial concerns, but, just as importantly, they provide recognition that can bolster confidence. Sue’s bequest will create an endowed scholarship for a female student returning to the University to study education. She hopes it will provide the support and instil

the confidence she needed after making that courageous return in the 1970s.

In recognition of Sue Caswell and the other founding members of the Legacy Society, a tree grove will be planted at the South Pacific Centre for Marine Science at the Leigh Marine Laboratory campus north of Auckland. This grove of native New Zealand trees, like legacies to learning, will grow over the years to benefit and sustain generations to come.

Andrea Rudy

PHOTO: GODFREY BOEHNKE

## Annual appeal

At the start of September, alumni received an annual appeal request to support students and significant initiatives in each of the University’s eight faculties and schools.

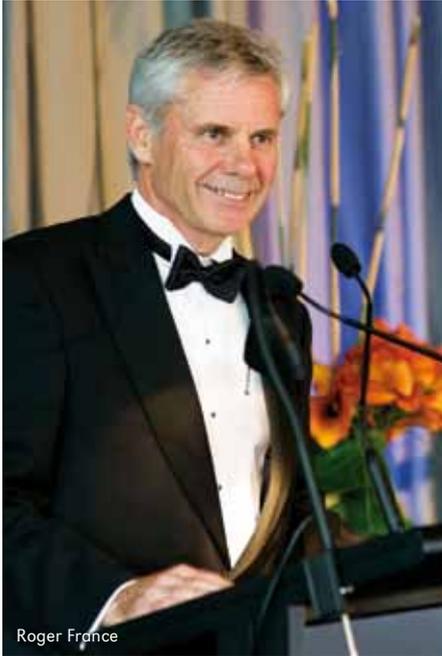
Changes in recent years to government funding, enrolment levels, and tuition fees have made alumni support imperative to ensure talented students with limited financial means further their education.

The 2008 appeal raised over \$75,000, and on the heels of such success we are reaching for \$90,000 in 2009. More than 73,000 alumni were included this year, and so far \$44,000 has been raised, and with letters being mailed in November to alumni living in the US and Canada, the total should move well past the halfway mark. Thanks to several generous donors who have given \$1,000 each, the average gift amount is well above that of previous years.

When the first annual appeal was sent out a few years ago it was with some trepidation. How would our alumni react to being asked for a donation when alumni before them were never asked? Luckily, many understood the importance of supporting higher education. Every community needs the help of its members to prosper, and the University community is no exception. It can take just one gifted graduate from The University of Auckland to positively impact the lives of thousands, be it through discoveries made in research, contributions to the arts, medical practice, or innovative entrepreneurship.

✦ For information on how you can make a tax-deductible gift to the 2009 Annual Alumni Appeal and help us reach our goal, please contact James Hill, External Relations, on +64 9 367 7187 or by email at [j.hill@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:j.hill@auckland.ac.nz) To learn more about the featured priorities of each faculty, please visit [www.givingtoauckland.org.nz](http://www.givingtoauckland.org.nz)

# In celebration of partnership



Roger France



On a mild November evening the University's new Chancellor, Roger France, hosted his first Chancellor's Dinner. The event was held in one of the City Campus's nearest neighbours, the Northern Club, and attended by 130 of the University's leading supporters and senior academics.

The annual dinner, instituted by Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon, has become a popular fixture on the University's calendar. It is an opportunity for the University to acknowledge the generous support of many people through service or philanthropy.

"Philanthropy is very important to The University of Auckland," said the Chancellor. "By the standards of a normal business, which we are not, the University operates on very fine margins." He talked of the downward pressure on revenue and the upward pressure on costs. "Paradoxically," he continued, "our continued station within the top one percent of the world's universities makes it harder, not easier, because we are effectively choosing to compete with far better funded entities in a very expensive game where access to funding is a key success factor."

The importance of continued investment, even at a time of national and international economic constraints, was stressed by the Vice-Chancellor. As New Zealand emerges from the recession, it will require two things he said.

"The first is the creation of a well educated, adaptive population, a key role for universities. The second is international quality research



Dr John Buchanan, Chair of The UK Friends of The University of Auckland, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stuart McCutcheon, Bridget Liddell, Chair of Friends of The University of Auckland in the United States, and Geoff Ricketts, Chair of The University of Auckland Foundation.

and development, innovation, and technology transfer. Here too, The University of Auckland is a leader. So we have not by any means 'shut up shop' during the recession."

The night's featured speaker, Professor Bill Denny, director of the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre (see our story on cancer research page 8), described how the partnership developed between a "university/philanthropy/business nexus" has helped develop and shape the centre and its world-class research in the high risk area of new drug creation. As an example of the benefits, he highlighted one of the eight new drugs

they have delivered to trial, called DMXAA, now in Phase three trials with Novartis. Novartis' 2007 licensing deal with the small UK company licensed to conduct the Phase two trials was worth NZ\$1.3 billion, the biggest of its kind in the world that year.

Guests were entertained during the evening by flautist, Christine Kim, and soprano, Alexandra Loan, both postgraduate students of the University, and the MC was the Director of External Relations, John Taylor.

Louise Callan

PHOTOS: BOJANA STOJADINOVIC

## Alumni achievers

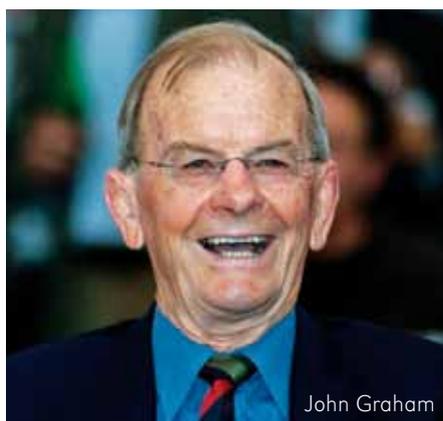
**TAANE CLARK** (BSc (Hons) 1995, BCom 1995, MSc 1996) has taken up the post of Reader in Genetic Epidemiology and Statistical Genomics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. After completing a DPhil (Oxford) in 2004, he worked as a senior statistician at the University of Oxford and Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute (Cambridge) on the genetic epidemiology of malaria.

**DR GLENN COLQUHUON** (BA 1988, BbB 1993, MBChB 1997, Distinguished alumnus) is one of eight Fulbright New Zealand Senior Scholars selected to study in the United States next year. Glenn, a practising physician and acclaimed New Zealand poet, will continue the longstanding relationship between creative writing and medicine by visiting narrative medicine and medical humanities programmes at Harvard, Columbia and Pennsylvania State Universities, with the aim of helping establish a similar programme at The University of Auckland upon his return.

**ANDREW DALEY** (BSc 2000, MSc 2002) was awarded the Ludwig-Boltzmann prize of the Austrian Physical Society (OePG) earlier this year. This award is granted by the OePG every other year to a talented scientist under the age of 35 for significant contributions to theoretical physics. The prize is worth 2200 Euros and is considered the highest Austrian award for young physicists. The award ceremony takes place in the presence of the Austrian Minister of Science at the annual meeting of the society.

Andrew completed his PhD in Quantum Optics at the University of Innsbruck in Austria in 2006 and has since been lecturing and doing further research. He has a number of papers published in scientific journals and presents at conferences around the world.

**JOHN GRAHAM** (BA 1957, MA 1958, LittD 2005) has received Auckland City Council's highest honour, the Distinguished Citizens Award, for 2009. John was Chancellor of The University of Auckland from 1999 to 2004, and headmaster of Auckland Grammar School for 21 years. He served as the Director and Chairman of the Owens Group, and Chairman of the Southern Cross Foundation Trust. He is also a former All Black captain and president of the New Zealand and Auckland Rugby Unions as well as coaching high school rugby and cricket teams, and being assistant coach of the Auckland A rugby team. He is a one-time manager of the New Zealand cricket team.



John Graham

**NINA HALL** (BA(Hons) 2007, MA 2009) has just taken up a Rhodes Scholarship to study for a PhD at Oxford University focused on the processing of illegal immigrants from Africa. "Managing immigration is one of the major challenges facing the world's leaders today," says Nina, whose interest derives directly from her own experiences overseas. At age 17 she lived with an Italian family near the coast of Sicily and was shocked to learn illegal African immigrants were being "literally washed up" on the shore. Last year she worked for two months at the United Nations Secretariat in New York, and in 2007 she carried out three weeks of intensive fieldwork in East Timor for her MA thesis on gender equality.



Nina Hall

**SUNIL KADRI** (BSc 1986) recently won the O2 X Male Entrepreneur of The Year Award in London. Co-founder of Optoswim Technologies, Kadri is a marine biologist and fish behaviour expert based in Glasgow who explores technologies to enhance fish farming. His latest venture dubbed the "fish disco" or "fish gym" comprises a LED light matrix which encourages regular swimming in farmed fish. Kadri explains that "essentially it's a system for providing exercise to fish in farms. This encourages the development of

muscle over fat – leading to leaner, healthier and tastier fish". Testing has also shown that the system leads to enhanced fish welfare (by lowering stress levels) and reduced farming production costs – making it highly popular with participating fish farmers.

**MURRAY SHEARD** (BE 1989, BA 1993, MA 1995, PhD in Philosophy 2007) is currently based in the Middle East (Jerusalem) working for the Tiri organisation ([www.tiri.org](http://www.tiri.org)). Tiri is a not for profit independent non-governmental organisation that works with governments, business and civil society to find practical solutions to "making integrity work". Improvements in integrity offer an opportunity for sustainable and equitable development worldwide. Tiri is a Māori word which means the protection of society by the removal of no-go areas (taboos) and the lifting of prohibitions or obstructions. It can also mean the scattering of seeds to bring forth a new generation.

**MELISSA WAKE** (DipObst 1985) received the 2009 Australian Health Minister's award for Health and Medical Research (a medal and a \$50,000 prize). Melissa works as a researcher at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. She has spent her career focused on finding practical clinical strategies to improve hearing, language and literacy, obesity and early mental health in Australian children. The Federal Health Minister's Award for Excellence in Health and Medical Research recognises outstanding achievement, and potential for future achievement by a young Australian researcher.

If you would like your contemporaries to know what you are up to, email the editor: [ingenio@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ingenio@auckland.ac.nz)

### Calling debating alumni

The University of Auckland Debating Society, which dates back to 1887, is starting an alumni network and is calling for all past members to get in touch.

In July next year the Society is hosting the Australasian Interschool Debating Championships (Austral) - the world's second-largest debating tournament

The championships will attract 400 university debaters from across the Asia-Pacific region to Auckland for a week of debating and social events.

To find out more about Austral visit [www.australs2010.com](http://www.australs2010.com) See [www.debating.co.nz](http://www.debating.co.nz) for the University society. To get in contact with us email [exec@debating.co.nz](mailto:exec@debating.co.nz)

## Save these dates

### Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner Friday 5 March 2010

Next year's Distinguished Alumni Awards dinner will be held on Friday 5 March in the Alumni Marquee on Old Government House lawn.

The University of Auckland and The University of Auckland Society bestow the annual awards to honour our alumni who have made outstanding contributions through their different achievements to their professions, to their communities and globally. Additionally, a Young Alumnus/Alumna of the Year Award is made to someone under 35 years of age.

The 2010 Distinguished Alumni winners are:

- Judge Andrew Becroft BA/LLB (Hons) 1984, Principal Youth Court Judge of New Zealand since 2001.
- Michael Parmenter MNZM MCPA (1st class Hons) 2008, one of New Zealand's leading and best-known dancers and choreographers.
- Dr Jennifer Plane Te Paa BTheol 1993, Med(Hons) 1995, PhD Berk. 2001, Ahorangi or Principal of Te Rau Kahikatea at the College of St John the Evangelist in Auckland.
- Professor Richard Sibsom BSc(1st class Hons) 1986, MSc Lond. 1970, PhD Lond. 1977, widely regarded as New Zealand's premier geologist over the past 20 years.
- Dr Nguyen Van Thanh BE 1971 (1st class Hons), PhD 1975, founder of NVT Technologies, an engineering company with 22 offices across 13 states in the USA.

The 2010 Young Alumna of the Year is:

- Dr Jessie Jacobson BSc(Hons) 2004, PhD 2008, who played a major role in developing a sheep model for studying Huntington's Disease and is now a postdoctoral research fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School.

Cost to attend the dinner is \$105 per person for University of Auckland Society members and staff. It is \$110 per person for all other attendees. To RSVP please visit [www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz) or phone +64 9 3737 599 ext 85622 for more information.

### Distinguished Alumni Speaker Day Saturday 6 March 2010

The Distinguished Alumni Speaker Day gives alumni, friends and staff the chance to attend free lectures by our Distinguished Alumni Award (DAA) recipients. For more information please visit [www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz)

## 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.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Brisbane

Allanah Johnston, [a.johnston@business.uq.edu.au](mailto:a.johnston@business.uq.edu.au)

#### Melbourne

Rupert Saint, [rupert.saint@bigpond.com](mailto:rupert.saint@bigpond.com)

#### Perth

Anne Morrell, [anne@sgc.com.au](mailto:anne@sgc.com.au)

#### Sydney

George Barker, [BarkerG@law.anu.edu.au](mailto:BarkerG@law.anu.edu.au)  
Regan van Berlo, [rvb@karaka.com.au](mailto:rvb@karaka.com.au)

### CANADA

#### Calgary

Allison Hall, [allisonhall77@hotmail.com](mailto:allisonhall77@hotmail.com)

### CHINA

#### Beijing

Vivian (Yang) Jiao, [vivianny@gmail.com](mailto:vivianny@gmail.com)  
Joy (Fengxin) Ding, [dingfengxin@bfsu.edu.cn](mailto:dingfengxin@bfsu.edu.cn)

#### Chengdu

Hua Xiang, [xianghua@swufe.edu.cn](mailto:xianghua@swufe.edu.cn)

#### Hong Kong

Raymond Tam, [tmkraymond@yahoo.com.hk](mailto:tmkraymond@yahoo.com.hk)

### EUROPE

#### Germany

Philipp Schuster, [philippschuster@hotmail.com](mailto:philippschuster@hotmail.com)

#### Scandinavia

Duncan Lithgow, [duncan@lithgow-schmidt.dk](mailto:duncan@lithgow-schmidt.dk)

#### Belgium

Ken Baker, [eualumni@skynet.be](mailto:eualumni@skynet.be)

*Ken also welcomes contact from alumni in Europe where there is no VAC in their area.*

### ISRAEL

Ofir Goren, [ofir.goren@solcon.co.il](mailto:ofir.goren@solcon.co.il)

### JAPAN

#### Tokyo

Simon Hollander, [nzhikozaemon@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:nzhikozaemon@yahoo.co.jp)

### MALAYSIA

#### Kuala Lumpur

KC Yong, [keecyong@streamyx.com](mailto:keecyong@streamyx.com)

### NEW ZEALAND

#### UAPA – Pacific Alumni

Nuhisifa Williams, [ns.williams@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ns.williams@auckland.ac.nz)

#### Pharmacy in New Zealand

Natasha Bell, [nbel020@aucklanduni.ac.nz](mailto:nbel020@aucklanduni.ac.nz)

If you would like to put yourself forward for any of these positions, please contact Sarah Crosswell with your CV at [alumni@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@auckland.ac.nz)

### TAIWAN

#### Taipei

Mago Hsiao, [mago.hsiao@nzte.govt.nz](mailto:mago.hsiao@nzte.govt.nz)

### USA

#### New Hampshire

Rushan Sinnaduray, [rsinnaduray@exetercongregation.org](mailto:rsinnaduray@exetercongregation.org)

#### New York

Rosena Sammi, [rosena@rosenasammi.com](mailto:rosena@rosenasammi.com)

#### Philadelphia

Nai-Wei Shih, [naiweishih@hotmail.com](mailto:naiweishih@hotmail.com)

#### Texas

Jyoti Maisuria, [j.maisuria@gmail.com](mailto:j.maisuria@gmail.com)

#### Washington, DC

Ruby Manukia, [rbmanukia@yahoo.com](mailto:rbmanukia@yahoo.com)

## Currently in process of setting up

- Korea in New Zealand
- Chinese in New Zealand
- Adelaide, Australia
- Shanghai, China

## We are currently searching for VACS in these regions

- San Francisco, USA
- Vancouver, Canada
- London, UK
- Singapore
- Seoul, Korea
- Chandigarh, India
- Jakarta, Indonesia
- Wellington, New Zealand
- Whangarei, New Zealand
- Hamilton, New Zealand

## In brief

### Recently published books by Auckland alumni

*Her Life's Work: Conversations with Five New Zealand Women* by alumna Dr Deborah Shepard (MA 1992; PhD 2000) published by Auckland University Press.

*Earthquake Resistant Design and Risk Reduction* by alumnus David Dowrick (BE 1958, DEng 2003), published by Wiley.

*Mothering Heights: A Novel Approach for Christian Mothers* by alumna Susan Brereton (BSc 1981), published by Judson Press.

*What Remains Behind* by alumna Dorothy Fowler (BA 2007, BAHons) 2008, MCV 2009), published by Random House.

*Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, a special edition edited by alumnus Peter O'Connor (BA 1980) and alumna Briar O'Connor (BA 1997, MA 1999).

*Pre-school Hyperactivity: Parent, Child and Peer Relationships* by alumna Louise Keown published by Saarbrücken:VDM Verlag, 2009 (MA 1996, PhD 2001).

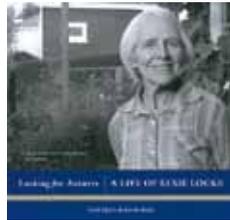
*The Origin of the Kava and Sugar Cane Plant, Sangone: The Legendary Turtle and Lomipeau the Giant Double-Hulled Canoe*, three bilingual books in Tongan and English by alumnus Semisi Fetokai Poutauaine (BAS 2007, BArch 2007).

*Older Adulthood Education and Social Change* by alumnus Dr Allan Martin (DipAdultEd 2000, MEd 2002, PhD 2006) published by alumnus VDM Verlag Dr Muller Saarbrücken.

*Rainforest Narratives: The Work of Janette Turner Hospital St Lucia* by alumnus David Callahan (BA 1974, MA 1980), published by University of Queensland Press, 2009.

**If you have published a book in the last six months, or will do so in the next, email the editor: ingenio@auckland.ac.nz**

## Looking for Answers



This is a compelling biography of alumna Elsie Locke (BA 1933) who received a Distinguished Alumni Award from The University of Auckland in 1996. A writer and activist, Elsie campaigned for birth control, women's rights, nuclear disarmament, social justice and the environment long before such causes were popular.

Elsie wrote almost 40 books, including historical novels for children and social histories of New Zealand, plus numerous articles and *School Journal* stories. Biographer Maureen Birchfield was invited to write *Looking for Answers: A Life of Elsie Locke* by the Locke family because of the family connection through her parents, Connie and Albert Birchfield, who were friends and fellow members of the Communist Party from the 1930s to mid-1950s. She accepted because of her "conviction that this was a very important life story that needed to be written". *Looking for Answers* is published by Canterbury University Press.

## Walking to Africa



Just a week after it was launched at the beginning of October, alumna Jessica La Baz's (BA 1983, MA 1985) poetry collection *Walking to Africa*, published by Auckland University Press, topped the New Zealand Fiction bestseller list. It is not often a poetry book makes it on to the bestseller list – even rarer that it should reach number one – but Jessica's poems tap into powerful subject matter. The story (told in poetry) is through a mother's eyes as she follows her young daughter's descent into severe depression. Readers meet specialists A through F, other kids, friends who want to help, an angel/nurse and the Ghostman – alongside therapies and cures, strategies and rites. Says Jessica: "*Walking to Africa* emerged as a way of exploring the strange

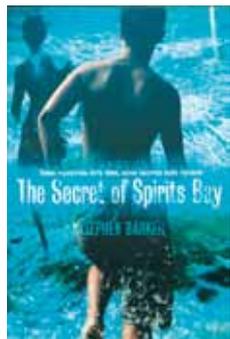
mental-health-care planet our family had arrived on. Mental illness was not something I knew about. Depression can be a horrible experience, and for a child not responding to medication it is an unimaginable place, for everyone who loves them."

## Weathered Bones



Alumna Michele Powles (MCW 2008) worked on this historical novel while doing the 2007 Master of Creative Writing. Published by Penguin, it tells the story of Antoinette – a widowed grandmother, Grace – an emotional young wife, and Eliza – the lighthouse keeper from another century. Inspired by the real-life character of New Zealand's only female permanent lighthouse keeper at Pencarrow – which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year – Eliza becomes a presence in Grace and Antoinette's lives, demanding an audience, a voice and perhaps even a life of her own in the present day.

## The Secret of Spirits Bay



When not working as a GP in Warkworth, alumnus Stephen Barker (PGDipObst 1991) likes to write. *The Secrets of Spirits Bay*, written primarily for children and young people and published by HarperCollins, is his first book. Combining a dose of adventure with history, ecology and culture it tells the story of Tom Bowman who loves to run. As he trains for an important race, he begins to see another boy, also running – but nobody else seems to see him. As the story unfolds Tom and his new friend Ana are caught up in the development of pristine Spirits Bay, where an ancient tapu may still have the power to bring disaster.



# Mis-remembering his New Zealand past: The art of Felix Kelly

Coming up at the Gus Fisher Gallery in February 2010 is the first ever exhibition in this country of the work of Auckland-born expat artist, Felix Kelly.

Curated by Dr Don Bassett of the University's Art History Department and mounted by the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery, the show has already been seen in Napier and Lower Hutt.

The exhibition is the natural outcome of Don's research which saw the publication in 2007 of the monograph *Fix: the Art and Life of Felix Kelly*.

Don was first attracted to Kelly's art when he discovered the small book *Paintings by Felix Kelly* published in London in the 1940s. It contained an introduction by no less a figure than the eminent British modernist writer and critic, Herbert Read, who bought a painting from the young artist and commissioned him to illustrate his novel *The Green Child*. Several of the works reproduced in *Paintings* are to be in this Gus Fisher show and represent Felix Kelly at his best. In the 1940s his art reflected British Neo-romanticism overlaid by a hint of Surrealism – the movement which had just been introduced to Britain when Kelly arrived there in 1935 aged 21.

At the time of his departure for Britain, Kelly was an enthusiastic young graphic artist with little experience as a painter. His flair for design and his sense of humour quickly directed him from commercial art to cartoons and to fashionable interior design magazines of the day. This exhibition contains several drawings for cartoons published in the British arts and literary magazine *Lilliput* (more Ronald Searle than David Low), as well as drawings for furnishings, ghosts and the like, used in the many books Kelly illustrated. Dust-jackets for 1950s romantic shockers are also included.

However, Kelly's ambition was to be taken seriously as a painter. By the 1940s he was being noted as an interesting addition to the Neo-romantic scene, exhibiting alongside artists such as Lucian Freud, John Piper and Frances Hodgkins. His specialty of grand houses (especially from the 18th and 19th centuries) in landscape eventually secured him a place as Britain's most famous society artist with a clientele which included royalty. In this, he failed to fulfil the promise Herbert Read had seen in him; but his fanciful imagination frequently invested these pictures with an eerie and fantastic note, not least when from

a distance of 20 years and 12,000 miles he mis-remembered his New Zealand past.

This exhibition includes the large tempera painting (from the 1950s) known as "A New Zealand Childhood Remembered" (pictured above). Here, an over-steep Rangitoto is joined by New Zealand flax, the paddle-steamer *Kiwi*, and an exaggeration of a New Zealand colonial house.

Too long overlooked in the country of his birth, Felix Kelly enriches the history of New Zealand expatriate art with his highly individual voice.

**Dr Don Bassett**  
Senior Lecturer, Department of Art History



"Buckland House", oil, 1945.

# Scholarship promotes life balance

The era of full-time professional sport risks spawning a generation of one-dimensional individuals with few career skills once their playing days end.

The University's first rugby scholarship, launched in October, underlines the importance of achieving a proper life balance.

The John Drake Memorial Scholarship honours the former All Black and BCom alumnus (BCom 1981) who died suddenly last December.

Worth \$5000 a year, it is for an outstanding all-rounder to study at the University and also to play for the University Rugby Football Club. It is awarded to a school leaver who has excelled both in rugby and academically with the potential to emulate the attitude and success of John Drake both on and off the rugby field.

A special scholarship fund has been established and an appeal target of \$300,000 set with a view to awarding up to three scholarships each year. The scholarship was created in consultation with John Drake's family, the University Rugby Football Club, The University of Auckland and close friends.

A renowned tighthead prop and scrummager, John Drake played for the Auckland University Club and was in two Gallaher Shield-winning teams. His Auckland representation spanned seven seasons and he went on to play 12 games for the All Blacks.

He was in the All Black team which won

the first Rugby World Cup in 1987 along with Varsity Club mates Sean Fitzpatrick, Grant Fox and David Kirk.

John Drake pursued a business career while actively supporting rugby, lifesaving, netball and programmes for youth at risk. He did rugby commentary for Sky Television and wrote a weekly newspaper column.

The inaugural winner of the scholarship is Matthew Match who plans to embark on a degree in civil engineering at the University in 2010. This year he was a prefect at Mount Albert Grammar School and head prefect at the school hostel, and he achieved highly in mathematics and physics.

Matthew played at blindside flanker in the first fifteen for his final two years. He was in the team's leadership group as well as being chosen for the Auckland under 18 side and the NZ Secondary Schools Sevens team.

Born and raised in the Dargaville-Ruawai district, Matthew has played rugby since he was four. He was dux of Dargaville Intermediate School and a school sports captain.

The award to Matthew was announced at a Friday evening reception in the Alumni Marquee attended by more than 300 people including John Drake's widow Cathy and leading lights from the world of rugby (among them John Hart, the guest speaker).

Declaring it "an honour and a privilege" to be the scholarship's first recipient, Matthew said it had given him "the opportunity to



John Drake.

pursue my academic career in engineering and my sporting ambition in rugby".

He said John Drake was "an outstanding individual who excelled at rugby and has been described as, 'unique', 'ahead of his time', 'a very special player' and 'one of life's good guys'."

Welcoming guests the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stuart McCutcheon, said the University had always endeavoured to produce balanced all-rounders who achieve at a high level both in their studies and in other areas of special interest, in the creative and performing arts, in public speaking and public service, and in sport. "In the latter respect, names such as Mahe Drysdale, Tom Ashley, Anthony Borich, Melissa Ingram and Liz Coster spring readily to mind.

"It is not just about playing rugby and studying," said Stuart, "but more about creating an environment where those who are committed to achieving excellence in all walks of life can develop characteristics important to both John Drake and the University – high aspirations, team spirit, determination, balance, humility and loyalty."

The reception took place on the eve of the final of the inaugural interfaculty rugby tournament at Colin Maiden Park on 10 October. The Ernst & Young Commerce Cougars defeated the Mighty River Power Engineering Eagles 40-22 to take the Sir Wilson Whineray Trophy, named after another noted alumnus and All Black who went on to a distinguished career in business. **Bill Williams**

✦ To find out more about the scholarship email [johndrake.scholarship@aurfc.co.nz](mailto:johndrake.scholarship@aurfc.co.nz)

From left: John Taylor, Director of External Relations and a prime mover in setting up the scholarship, Bridget Drake, Cathy Drake and Matthew Match.



PHOTO: BOJANA STOJADINOVIC



## Bright sparks

When Brad Lovett dreamed up the ultimate portable composting toilet one hot summer's day last year, he never realised that his next-generation waste recycling idea would clinch him a major entrepreneurial award and international exposure.

The 22-year-old BCom student was using a particularly unsavoury toilet on a South Island building site when ideas for a composting solution to the standard cubicle WC started floating through his head.

"There's nothing worse than the smell of a fermenting portable toilet, particularly when it's being vacuum-pumped," Brad – the founder of Green Loos – says. "I had designed composting systems before, and knew those principles could be implemented within a portable toilet as well."

Green Loos – comprising Brad and fellow Commerce students Lucy Luo, 19, and Angus Blair, 23, – has topped this year's Spark \$100k Challenge with its environmentally-friendly, fully automated composting technology that converts human waste into higher-value organic fertilisers.

The company, which will initially target the portable toilet market but ultimately venture into high-tech human waste disposal markets, won \$20,000 in seed capital and \$10,000 of incubation time in The ICEHOUSE – New Zealand's premier business growth centre (see the profile of ICEHOUSE in the Autumn 2009 issue of *Ingenio*).

Spark – The University of Auckland Entrepreneurial Challenge – is a student-

led initiative begun in 2003 to foster the growth of an entrepreneurial culture and commercialise the host of innovative ideas developed by students and staff.

The 2009 competition has been hailed as the competition's best ever, with a whopping 378 entries into the inaugural Ideas Challenge. A transformation of the Spark programme – including a new two-day intensive Ideas 2 Business workshop in association with The ICEHOUSE – has seen some of the highest quality entrants in the competition's seven-year history.

Spark chief executive Sonali Nidamarty says this year's entries have been extremely diverse...from new food products, "green" environment solutions and road safety improvement to agricultural productivity, new tourism industry products and charitable sector opportunities.

"It is wonderful to see the entrepreneurial ecosystem that has developed around Spark," Sonali says. "Already, 2009 has seen four of last year's best ideas become operational in just ten months – in fact, the 2008 \$40k Challenge winner GetParticipants.com is now actively seeking people to participate in research surveys and trials being undertaken by University and other researchers.

"The runner-up last year, Brightmind Labs, is now internationally selling its product designed to help autistic children while the social entrepreneurship challenge winner last year, Savy, has already delivered workshops on financial literacy to more than 100 classes of senior students in schools around Auckland."

Over Spark's seven-year history, students and staff of the University have created more than 40 companies and in excess of 170 jobs, Spark Steering Committee chair Geoff Whitcher says.

These companies sell products in more than 20 countries around the world, and many "Sparkies" have enjoyed successes in other areas, Geoff says, with three being made Fulbright Platinum Scholars for Entrepreneurship: Priv Bradoo, Alex Dunayev and Manoj Patel.

Runner-up for 2009 and winner of \$10,000 in seed capital is Nova Eco-Tech, which addresses the growing need – particularly internationally – for automated vehicles to operate on cleaner and cheaper alternative fuels such as natural gas and biomethane. Special prizes have been awarded this year to Metabo-link (a Uniservices \$2500 award for the best unpolished gem), and both The Hurtle and Points2Change, which received three months' incubation in The ICEHOUSE. See [www.spark.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.spark.auckland.ac.nz)

**Kathryn Calvert**



From left: Angus Blair, Brad Lovett, Lucy Luo and Dean of the Business School Professor Greg Whittred.



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