

# BRIGHT SPARKS

**Cover Story: Understanding Atmospheric Rivers with Hamish Prince**  
**Feature Story: The Dance of Life – an interview with Jan Bolwell**



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## THE TEAM



**PIP CLIMO**  
PROGRAMME MANAGER  
pip@fulbright.org.nz



**THERESE LLOYD**  
SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
therese@fulbright.org.nz



**SARITA MAGAN**  
EVENTS AND ALUMNI ADVISOR  
sarita@fulbright.org.nz



**JAMIE ROBERTSON**  
EXECUTIVE AND CORPORATE  
SERVICES ASSISTANT  
ea@fulbright.org.nz



**JULIE WILLIAMS**  
CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER  
julie@fulbright.org.nz



**MAGNOLIA WILSON**  
PROGRAMME MANAGER  
magnolia@fulbright.org.nz



**PENELOPE  
BORLAND**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This is our final issue of Bright Sparks for the year, and what a year it has been! Whereas 2019 was full of firsts—the first ever Fulbright rebrand, the first global meeting of Fulbright Executive Directors in Washington DC, the first year our grantees were able to enjoy the benefits of increased funding from MFAT—2020 has been characterised by thwarted expectations and continual challenges. But it has also been transformative.

Navigating the effects of Covid-19, both immediate and tangential, has been a constant battle for Fulbright grantees and staff alike. Despite the challenges posed by the different Covid alert levels—from the extremes of lockdown, to the day to day reality of scanning Q-codes, wearing masks, and carrying hand sanitiser—the new norm is starting to feel less daunting and more manageable.

For Fulbright New Zealand, it may be too soon to say we have prevailed, however, now that we have managed to secure deferments and delayed starts for all our 2020 cohort, a sense of positivity and vigour is beginning to return. The new incoming US administration and the likelihood of a vaccine being available in 2021 are contributing to a renewed sense of hope going forward.

We began 2020 by welcoming the US Fulbright grantees in February, only to farewell almost all of them a mere 6 weeks later when the pandemic was declared. We all felt genuine sadness at their early departure. While this was naturally a low point, there have also been some wonderful high points. One such highlight was the Fulbright NZ Awards held on August 5. It was wonderful to be able to celebrate the achievements of our New Zealand grantees even though, at that time, the question of when they would be able to travel to the US was unanswerable. The atmosphere of the Fulbright Awards was one of genuine gratitude and seemed to embody the “compassion, peace and friendship” that is at the heart of the Fulbright mission.

It is with that spirit that we celebrate the resilience of our grantees and alumni in this issue of

Bright Sparks. Fulbright Science and Innovation graduate Hamish Prince has been busy researching the vast storms known as “atmospheric rivers” while he waits to take up his Fulbright scholarship next year. Geneticist Aneska Hoskin, also a member of this year’s graduate cohort, outlines some of the key lessons learnt during her year spent as a research assistant at Ngati Porou Hauora, the only Maori owned and run hospital in Aotearoa. We also catch up with dancer and Fulbright alumna Jan Bolwell who tells us how her heroic battle with cancer unearthed a passion for playwrighting. Jan was recently awarded an ONZM for her services to dance.

We are also delighted to round off the year by announcing a new alumni seminar series. Fulbright Good Works will showcase the research of our alumni in a programme of monthly seminars that covers an array of subjects. See our call for expressions of interest on pages 22 and 23 for more information.

As we wrap up this tumultuous year, I want to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to the 2020 Fulbright cohort. Thank you for your patience and resilience as we have navigated these uncharted waters together. I also want to say a special thank you to the Fulbright NZ staff and board for your hard work and support through multiple challenges to ensure that our grantees’ health and welfare have been at the forefront of every decision made.

Thank you also to our wonderfully engaged Fulbright alumni who continue to inspire us with their good work.

From all of us here at Fulbright New Zealand, we wish you all a safe and relaxing summer and a very Merry Christmas!

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PO Box 3465  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of material in this newsletter, Fulbright New Zealand does not accept liability for any errors or omissions. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Fulbright New Zealand.

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*The crew at the top of the glacier preparing for a big day on the ice*

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- **Dr Gaurav Sharma** made history in the recent election by being the first ever MP of Indian descent to win an electorate seat in Hamilton West. Labour's Dr Sharma defeated sitting MP National's Tim Macindoe by a margin of 4425 votes. In 2015, Dr Sharma was a Fulbright NZ graduate at George Washington University where he completed a Master of Business in Public Health.
- It was great to see 2020 Axford Fellowship recipient **Rachel Galanter** on local news back home in North Carolina. Rachel is the Executive Director of Exchange Family Center in Durham, NC and she's working hard to secure funding to help families in her community struggling from the many effects of Covid. While she was on her Axford award earlier in the year Rachel worked at Oranga Tamariki. You can read her Axford report on the Fulbright website [www.fulbright.org.nz](http://www.fulbright.org.nz) or click [here](#).
- Congratulations to **Professor Steven Ratuva** on receiving the 2020 Royal Society Te Apārangi Metge Medal for excellence and building relationships in the social science research community. Professor Ratuva is the Director of the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Canterbury. In 2017 he received a Fulbright NZ Scholar Award and visited UCLA, Duke University and Georgetown University where he researched inequality, affirmative action, and Pacific Island minorities. To read a fascinating interview with Steven, go to the Korero tab at [www.e-tangata.co.nz](http://www.e-tangata.co.nz) or click [here](#).



## FULBRIGHT NZ ALUMNI SEMINAR GRANT

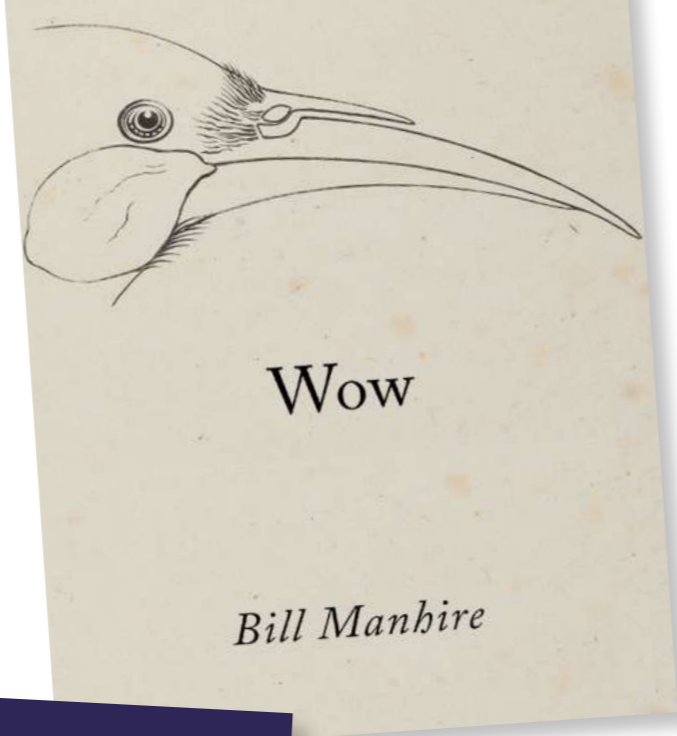
*The Fulbright New Zealand Alumni Seminar grant allows for Fulbright alumni based in NZ to apply for a grant of up to \$1,150.00 towards the planning and delivery of a seminar/presentation in New Zealand on a topic related to their specialist field.*

*This grant will support you to share your research, build and grow connections, and contribute to the wider NZ community through your mahi.*

**TO FIND OUT MORE, OR TO RECEIVE AN APPLICATION FORM, EMAIL [ALUMNI@FULBRIGHT.ORG.NZ](mailto:ALUMNI@FULBRIGHT.ORG.NZ)**



- Fulbright alumnus Bill Manhire's new collection of poems *Wow* (VUP, 2020) "begins with the song of an extinct bird and journeys on into troubling futures." Carol Rumens from *The Guardian* says, "I hadn't expected to be echoing the collection's title quite so early in my reading, but the poem insisted. It was a 'wow' of grief and shock, however, as well as admiration."
- *Goddess Muscle* (Huia, 2020), the highly anticipated new collection of poetry by Karlo Mila, was written over a decade and explores a wide range of themes including love and humanity, as well as the effects of racism and power on Pasifika peoples. Karlo Mila was awarded the Fulbright-Creative New Zealand Pacific Writers Residency in 2015.



AWARDS AND APPOINTMENTS OF NOTE



**Rez Gardi** (Fulbright General Grad 2018) has been making a huge impression overseas as an international human rights lawyer and founder of Empower, a youth-led organisation aiming to address the under-representation of refugees in higher education. She recently won the 'Global' category of the Impact Awards for her outstanding advocacy work. She is currently living in Iraq working as a lawyer prosecuting ISIS.



Congratulations to **Te Puoho Katene** who has recently been appointed as the new Kaihautū (Executive Director) at Te Pūtea Whakatupu Trust. Te Puoho was a Fulbright graduate in 2017 where he attended Stanford University and was the Obama Foundation Leader for the Asia-Pacific region. This is a brilliant appointment, congratulations TP!



It was also wonderful to see Fulbright alumnus **Professor Craig Rodger**, Head of the University of Otago's Department of Physics, recently receive NZ\$15,038,728 over 5 years for research into Space-Weather prediction and risk mitigation for New Zealand energy infrastructure. **Sesquicentennial Distinguished Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman**, a long-time friend of Fulbright NZ, also at the University of Otago, will receive NZ\$12,393,935 over 5 years for research into public housing and urban regeneration to maximise well-being. Congratulations to you both!



Fantastic to see that 2020 Fulbright Ngā-Pae o te Māramatanga graduate **Erena Wikaire** has received a Hohua Tutengahe Fellowship for postdoctoral research worth \$554,000. Erena's research will examine Māori experiences of substance use and will also apply traditional Māori healing (Rongoā Māori) to reduce wider influences of drug harm and improve health outcomes for whānau. You can read more about Erena's research in the Winter/Spring issue of Bright Sparks at [www.fulbright.org.nz](http://www.fulbright.org.nz) or click here.



Congratulations to **Tusiata Avia** (Fulbright-Creative New Zealand Pacific Writers Residency, 2005) who was recently made a 2020 NZ Arts Foundation Laureate. Each year, the Laureate Awards honour up to ten outstanding practising artists, each of whom receive \$25,000.



**Professor Edwina Pio**, University Director of Diversity at AUT, has been appointed Chair of the Academic Advisory Board of Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College of New Zealand. Edwina says, "It is an honour and privilege to serve a religious institute within the context of my work at AUT and internationally." She hopes to further enhance Te Kupenga's research and strengthen relationships and collaborations with stakeholders.

**COVER STORY: GRANTEE EXPERIENCE**

# UNDERSTANDING ATMOSPHERIC RIVERS WITH HAMISH PRINCE

*2020 Fulbright Science and Innovation graduate Hamish Prince from Dunedin is keeping busy while he waits to take up his Fulbright award next year. He tells us about his interest in atmospheric rivers – vast storms that are the largest transport mechanisms of freshwater on the planet.*

Following the 2020 Fulbright pre-departure orientation there was plenty of apprehension as to what our plans will be for the year. With travel off the cards I decided to postpone the commencement of my PhD programme in atmospheric science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and spend some time exploring my own personal research interests, a refreshing switch after a fair few years of university study. My interests are in extreme weather events, particularly extreme precipitation and the impact of these storms on the environment and society. I study a particular type of storm called an atmospheric river; large hemispheric-scale plumes of water vapour that extend from the tropics towards the poles. New Zealand, being situated halfway between the tropics and the poles, experiences regular atmospheric river occurrence which account for the majority of our extreme weather. Coincidentally, the USA is situated in a similar midlatitude location to New Zealand and so the skills of studying storms in New Zealand are highly transferable to the USA.

For most of 2020 I have been lucky enough to be employed remotely at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego in the Centre for Western Weather and Water Extremes. I work on impact-based storm analysis, specifically, the economic loss of individual atmospheric rivers. Annually, these storms produce on average USD\$1.1 billion of damage to the western USA, with the worst individual Californian storms exceeding USD\$3 billion in damages. If we are able to recognize what makes a storm damaging, we are able to enhance the forecast of future storms through communication of the potential damage, a concept known as impact-based forecasting. Rather than a forecast reporting on the volume

*Hamish Prince, Nariefa Abraham and Tamara Pletzer (PhD candidates from the University of Otago)*



of precipitation, there is the potential to report the damage or economic loss that will occur (based on previous experiences). It is crucial to remember that behind these economic figures of storm damage are real stories of loss and disaster: the flooding and destruction of homes, landslides destroying major roads, avalanche initiation, dam failures and evacuations. The hope is that we can mitigate at least some of these impacts through situational awareness.

The direct human connection of this research is what draws me to this work, with the goal being to maintain and improve livelihoods through science-informed decisions. I certainly intend to bring this type of analysis to New Zealand in coming years. While the extreme, damaging nature of atmospheric rivers is crucial, these storms also bring beneficial outcomes through the delivery of freshwater to New Zealand. Understanding the occurrence of these events is therefore fundamental to managing freshwater resources. Over the last 40 years these storms have been shifting towards the south of the country through connections with larger changes in the global climate, particularly the southward shifting westerly wind belt; trends which are undoubtedly influenced by human activity on this planet. In practice this broadly means fewer storms for the North Island and increased storm occurrence for the lower South Island. We have already seen the challenges of drought for Auckland in 2020 and the prospect of decreasing storm occurrence for this region further strengthens the need to correctly manage our water resources.

The final impact of these storms that I examine

is on snow and ice in the Southern Alps. Atmospheric rivers impose a unique dichotomy of impacts to New Zealand alpine regions, being the bringer of snow while also causing the majority of melt, dependant on the season. Glaciers and snowpack act as 'frozen water towers', providing about 15% of water in South Island rivers through seasonal melt. The potential of increased storm occurrence in the Southern Alps therefore needs to be approached carefully to understand the possible implications for seasonal snow and future loss of glacier ice mass. In order to understand and quantify the impacts of weather and climate on our alpine glaciers, measurements and observations

are key. I have been lucky enough to travel into the stunning Southern Alps the last few years to aid in collecting these observations of seasonal snowpack and glacial mass change in a combined fieldwork effort from the University of Otago, Victoria University of Wellington and NIWA. The goal of this most recent trip to

Brewster Glacier (pictured) was to measure the amount of snow that was present in this high alpine glacier at the end of winter while also installing instrumentation to quantify the amount of snow and ice that will be melted by the end of summer 2021. Being in the mountains is always awe-inspiring and it will be hard to say goodbye to these alps once I do begin my Fulbright journey. Postponing my formal Fulbright journey for 2020 was a tough decision to make but looking back on the year, I have certainly been able to continue with my own personal research in the spirit of Fulbright with the ambition of mutual international understanding.

***“The direct human connection of this research is what draws me to this work, with the goal being to maintain and improve livelihoods through science-informed decisions.”***

### **SHARE YOUR STORY – CONTRIBUTE TO BRIGHT SPARKS**

We'd love to feature more content created by Fulbrighters. Send us your articles, blog posts, event reports, travel adventures or photo essays. Bright Sparks is sent to over 2200 Fulbright New Zealand alumni around the world. We also share it on our website and with friends of Fulbright in the private, public and tertiary sectors across New Zealand.





Roadblock in Paeroa. Photo credit: Alan Gibson

## GRANTEE EXPERIENCE

# SHONA MUNRO – LESSONS FROM LEVEL 4

The following article by 2020 Fulbright NZ Scholar Shona Munro featured in the New Zealand Police Association's monthly magazine *Police News*. Shona is a Teaching and Learning Adviser at the Police College. Her Fulbright award will relate to the collective leadership development work she is doing alongside Police's Whanganui, Rangitikei and Ruapehu Area Leadership Development Programme.

American historian David Fischer, who has spent time living in New Zealand, wrote in his 2012 book *Fairness and Freedom* that there is a striking difference in core values between the United States and New Zealand.

American culture, he says, is based fundamentally on liberty, freedom and rights of the individual. For example, the “right to bear arms” and, in the current context, the “right not to wear a mask”. In contrast, Fischer says, New Zealand culture is fundamentally based on fairness and natural justice.

Although we know that serious inequities exist in New Zealand, Fischer's observations on our national psyche go some way towards explaining

how, and why, as a nation we were able to mostly “be kind” and behave as a “team of five million” during Covid-19 lockdown periods.

During this crisis, fairness has been evident in the way the Government responded with inclusive information and financial aid. There was a real sense that we were all in this together.

The way we responded as police was deeply embedded in the notion of fairness and natural justice. The “Four Es” – engage, educate, encourage and enforce – were a spectacular success with the public who were fully aware and supportive of the approach.

By contrast, it was reported that Queensland Police issued A\$1 million in fines on just one week-

end in early April. The public there were incensed and felt alienated.

Back in New Zealand, our staff worked alongside iwi to keep communities safe.

The sense of community was evident in the massive increase in donations to charities and in the images on TV and social media of neighbourhoods and whānau supporting each other. There was a sense of belonging and connectedness that naturally bubbled to the surface.

As we consider the lessons from the pandemic, we have been given a stark reminder that what happens elsewhere in the world (eg, a fish market in Wuhan or the death of George Floyd in the US), has an impact on us too.

The virus has reminded us that the “every man for himself” approach as we have seen played out in the US is a fundamentally flawed way of being and confirms Fisch-

er's view of the American obsession with freedom and the rights of the individual.

I'm now wondering if New Zealand Police's stated vision to be the “safest country in the world” is unwittingly aligned to competitive American core values rather than our own?

For us to be the safest country, logic says that other countries must be doing worse than us – and that their communities need to be less safe than ours.

To reflect our core values, we must leverage off the sense of belonging and connectedness that shone through during the Level 4 lockdown. It wasn't a new phenomenon; we were simply given an opportunity to notice it. What appears to be

happening in New Zealand Police is that we are learning to recognise where our real strengths lie and we are beginning to police in ways that are starting to make a positive difference in our most vulnerable communities. In doing so, we are capturing the attention of other policing jurisdictions.

The Whanganui, Rangitikei and Ruapehu Area Leadership Development Programme, Tū Tika Tū Pono, which calls for participants to “be just and fair, be genuine and true to ourselves and our communities” is taking a collective leadership approach using a te ao Māori (Māori worldview) perspective to shape their policing responses.

**“The ‘Four Es’ – engage, educate, encourage and enforce – were a spectacular success with the public who were fully aware and supportive of the approach.”**

If our national core values are indeed fairness and natural justice, and our sense of connectedness and belonging as shown in lockdown are a demonstration of who we really are, then perhaps the Commissioner's request to “Be

First, Then Do” is not as complex as many first thought.

Policing is difficult and complicated, but our people find ways to be authentic and connected to our communities, and this shapes what we do.

In every district, there are police approaching their jobs in innovative and creative ways with positive outcomes in our communities.

We have an alternative vision for policing linked to our sense of natural justice and fairness. This sets us apart as a policing jurisdiction and sets the scene for us to offer guidance, direction and alternative ways of policing to a world in which we are all inextricably connected.

## HAVE YOU JOINED FULBRIGHTER?

Fulbrighter is an exclusive online networking platform specifically designed for Fulbright alumni and grantees. It is a space where you can connect and engage with the global community of Fulbrighters.

Share your own news, events and research, or build new relationships to share ideas or collaborate on projects.

To register for Fulbrighter, visit <https://fulbrighternetwork.com/> signup or download the app.





Kari Giordano.



Stephanie Graham

Photo credit: Sundae Design + Photo

### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## FULBRIGHT DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS RETURN TO THEIR CLASSROOMS WITH EXPANDED WORLDVIEW

*In a first for the Fulbright Programme, two sisters from the US, both teachers, received the Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching simultaneously. Stephanie Graham took up her award in New Zealand while her sister Kari Giordano chose Scotland.*

*Article by Hannah van Sickle for The Berkshire Edge. (Edited for length and reprinted with permission).*

Two sisters, both teachers in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, return to the (virtual) classroom with a newly expanded worldview sure to benefit the largely rural district. Last year, in what was a first for the Fulbright Program worldwide, Kari Giordano and Stephanie Graham were each awarded the Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching; they returned to the States — from Scotland in March and New Zealand in July, respectively — with big ideas gleaned in the field about place-based teaching and inquiry learning sure to augment the worldview of local students enrolled in their respective fine arts classes at Mount Everett Regional School.

“Opportunities to integrate place-based teaching into the broader curriculum are many,” Kari Giordano shared in a blog post from Edinburgh, where she spent three months with her family in early 2020. Her Fulbright project was centered around “place-based art education and how utilizing such pedagogy can help alleviate challenges that rural schools face and some of the negative effects of urbanization.”

Stephanie Graham chose New Zealand with a clear project goal: to learn about methods and practices of teachers and students who have effective inquiry learning experiences as either a sole or combined approach to education. While abroad,



Fulbright US Distinguished Teachers Servena Narine, Stephanie Graham and Brynn Johnson, with FBNZ Programme Manager Pip Climo (seated).

Stephanie was based in Wellington under the advisory of Victoria University, although the bulk of her research saw her traveling to more remote areas of the country.

“I spent most of my time in the North Island, visiting “area” schools which would be the equivalent of regional schools in Berkshire County, only smaller and much more rural,” Stephanie explained. “I really got into learning about Indigenous people. I was really amazed with what they have done in creating a bi-cultural experience.” Back in the Berkshires, Stephanie wants to figure out how to incorporate the two in what she calls a ‘tangential process’ by bringing more local Indigenous studies into the curriculum.

Her time in New Zealand illuminated “[the many ways] to get creative with the schedule and structure of our schools that would be beneficial to students.”

The sisters, originally from the Hudson Valley, have a combined 24 years of teaching in SBRSD.

Kari began the process of applying for a Fulbright award, and Stephanie followed suit once she discovered they could apply to separate programs in separate countries. “It was a very far-fetched idea,” she explained in a recent phone interview, that they would both be granted awards, but she forged ahead.

“It is important for schools to encourage teachers to [apply for these types of opportunities],” Kari said, calling the process “a life-changing experience ... not only being in Scotland and seeing how communities support their schools, but also being a graduate student again,” a sentiment Stephanie shares. “The whole Fulbright mission speaks to the value of what a teacher can get out of this [type of] cultural exchange,” she said, citing that immersing oneself in another culture changes one’s worldview. “I would encourage any teacher to apply,” she said, adding, “I think we are always growing. And as a result of [my Fulbright experience], I am a better person and a better teacher.”

## GRANTEE EXPERIENCE

# ANEZKA HOSKIN – A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A MĀORI GENETICIST

The following article by current Fulbright NZ Science and Innovation grantee Anezka Hoskin featured on the Variant Bio website, a genomics start-up based out of Brooklyn, New York. It is the first in their new series titled Spotlight on Global Genomics which aims to highlight diverse perspectives on genomics around the world. Reprinted here with permission and edited for length.

I come from a large family of ten children. We are often told by strangers that we don't look anything alike. So when I was introduced to the concepts of genetic variation and inheritance in high school, it sparked an interest in me because it explained how my siblings and I look so different even though we have the same parents. Since then, my ambitions in the field of medical genetics have been shaped by the experiences of my family and my people: the Māori people of New Zealand. I have three tribal affiliations: Ngati Kahu, Ngati Porou, and Te-Aitanga-a-Hauiti.

In 2015 my younger sister, Halim, nearly lost her life due to undiagnosed type 1 diabetes. Following that frightening incident, I dedicated myself to the field of medical genetics, promising her that I would “look into it.” I was very disheartened to realise that Māori and Pacific Islanders in New Zealand have some of the highest rates of type 2 diabetes and related conditions in the world. Yet there is a tremendous lack of Māori participants in genetic studies as well as principle investigators, lab technicians, and students. My devotion to the field of medical genetics has transformed from the love I have for my sister to the love I have for my people and my burning desire for equity in science. I will make certain that Māori and Indigenous communities benefit from these medical advances by protecting and prioritizing them in genetic studies. Here are three key lessons I have learnt during my last year as a genetics graduate student.

### 1. Science communication and education is just as important as the research

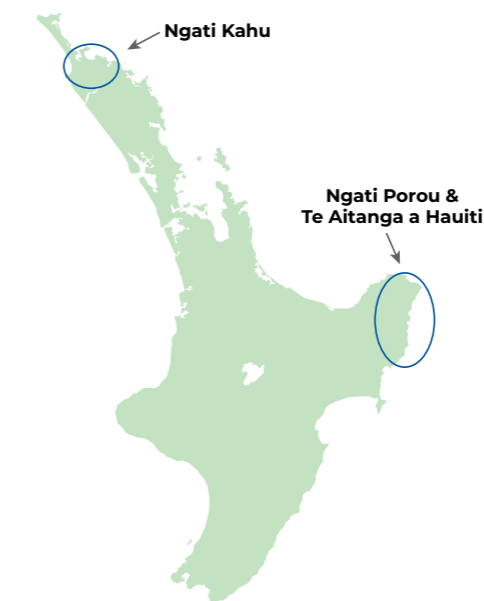
The University of Otago runs a program called Science Wānanga. A group of science researchers, students, and cultural support staff from the University of Otago travel to rural Māori communities to deliver science modules to Māori youth between the ages of 11 to 14 years old. The wānanga are held in local marae. Meeting communities in their own environments and teaching science topics that they themselves select is important for catering to their specific needs and contexts. We



taught kids how to extract DNA from strawberries and about Indigenous selective breeding of crops like corn, kumara, and wheat. While my primary focus is on doing genetic research, it is opportunities like Science Wānanga that keep me motivated and fill my heart with joy.

### 2. Don't be camera shy: use media opportunities to shape social narratives around genetics

Although it can be nerve racking to talk about my work on camera, it is so important to shape the narratives of our results (so that others cannot). Previous studies in New Zealand with Māori participants have resulted in the propagation of negative social stereotypes. Learning to step outside my comfort zone and articulate my results for a wide range of audiences has been rewarding and satisfying. Click <https://www.teaomaori.news/ngati-porou-geneticist-takes-on-type-2-diabetes> to watch an interview with Māori Television about my Master's project investigating Polynesian genetics



TOP: Working in the lab of Dr. Tony Merriman at the University of Otago in Dunedin. 500 genomes of individuals from the same tribe as me are stored here. Knowing that my relatives are present with me in my workspace is both a cautionary warning and an encouraging motivator. Photo credit: Native Affairs, Māori Television

BOTTOM: Science Wānanga 2019, Hauiti Marae, Tolaga Bay, New Zealand. Over 50 young people attended a three-day science education camp/wānanga. This was the first time I ever taught genetics on my own tribal lands. Photo credit: Anezka Hoskin

involved in metabolic diseases.

### 3. Recognize opportunities to learn

While working as a research assistant for Ngati Porou Hauora I had the opportunity to use my research skills to serve my tribe. I was based in Te Puia Springs at the only tribal-run hospital in New Zealand. Te Rangawairua o Paratene Ngata is a research centre named after Dr Paratene Ngata, the doctor who began a genetic research relationship with Professor Tony Merriman—my supervisor at the University of Otago—over a decade ago. This opportunity gave me a glimpse into my future of working with my own people in a research space.

However, during this time I was also exposed to the barriers that Indigenous health organizations experience when working with outside researchers. The lack of diversity in science, lack of funding, and lack of respect for Indigenous health care providers convinced me to pursue a PhD.

With the support of my family and tribe I have decided to complete my PhD in the Genetics Department at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. I am extremely grateful to have received a New Zealand Fulbright Science and Innovation award and a Stanford Graduate Fellowship to make this goal achievable.

*“E tipu e rea mo ngā rā o tō ao. Ko tō ringa ki ngā rākau ā te Pakeha Hei ara mō tō tinana. Ko tō ngākau ki ngā tāonga a ō tipuna Māori.”*

*“Grow up and thrive for the days destined to you. Your hands to the tools of the Europeans to provide physical sustenance, your heart to the treasures of your Māori ancestors.”*

– Sir Apirana Ngata, Ngati Porou (1874–1950)

My PhD studies will continue to be guided by this whakatauki said by Sir Apirana Ngata. Inspired by people like him, I will continue to fight for the health of our people by using both the treasures of our ancestors and the modern tools of genetics.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

# THE DANCE OF LIFE: AN INTERVIEW WITH JAN BOLWELL

*Jan Bolwell received a Fulbright NZ Cultural Development Award in 1993 which enabled her to visit several different dance-education programmes around the US. Jan has continued to be a fierce supporter of dance in New Zealand as a performer and educator. Earlier this year she received an ONZM in recognition of her outstanding services to dance. Jan is also a successful playwright and her most recent play *Welcome to the Death Café* was staged at Bats Theatre in Wellington.*

*(The following interview has been edited for length).*

**“I want to show the world that older women can dance.”**

### **How do you think the dance community has changed in Aotearoa since you first began dancing in your youth?**

What is happening in the dance world mirrors what is happening in society in general, in that there's much greater cultural diversity in this country. When I think about my dance career, I grew up in Dunedin, and I have no recollection of seeing any Māori performing arts group in Dunedin, nor any Pacifica or Asian dance. I learnt Highland dancing as a child. When I look at our dance culture now it's transformed utterly. There is simply no comparison between what it is like now and what it was like when I was younger. Young people especially can try all sorts of different forms of dance now.

### **You started your own dance company for older women *Crows Feet* in 1999. Can you tell me what inspired you to start this group?**

I was diagnosed at the age of 48 with breast cancer in 1998 and I had a double mastectomy. At that point in my life I was working as a dance educator, teacher and an administrator. But after going through breast cancer, I found I had to

return to dancing in order to rediscover my body. I just had a compulsion to do it. In 1999 I created a work called *Off My Chest*, which was a dance work, but I also wrote about my experience. Gillian Whitehead, the wonderful composer, wrote the score for it, and I used her music to create my dance. I'd also been doing a writing course at the Cancer Society run by the writer Renee, so I put both things together on the stage and I got back into performance mode.

Filmmaker Gaylene Preston saw it and she used it as a through line in her film *Titless Wonders*, a film about women with breast cancer. I got approached by people who said, “Jan, we'd like to dance like that, can you teach us?” So, this is how *Crows Feet* was born. A group of four of us, all in dance education, got together and I thought, if we're going to do this I'd like to make dances, and more than that, I want to put them out in the public arena. I want to show the world that older women can dance. We started with four of us, and we did a couple of gigs which were well received and now, 21 years later, we have over 40 people in four groups. The dancers range in age from mid to late 40s to our eldest member who is in her early 80s. Some are highly trained dancers and some have never danced before but always wanted to. It doesn't matter if you've never had any training, anyone is welcome in the group, but the thing is, they have to perform. They have to put themselves out there, which can be quite challenging, but that's the kaupapa of the group. And amazingly, we seem to get audiences! Women of our age range enjoy coming along and seeing themselves reflected back. We're not trying to be young things, we're dancing according to our age and our skill. The most empowering aspect is that we're a community. We dance together, and there's wonderful friendships and support, I mean, we've all got baggage at this stage of our lives!

### **You came to playwrighting later in life. What was is about this genre that appealed?**

When I'd finished writing *Off My Chest* and put it on in a few places, Renee said to me, “well you can't stop now Jan, what are you going to do next?” I wrote a piece about my father's survival in the Second World War and then I worked with dramaturg and good friend Ralph McAlister to turn it into a play. It ended up being very successful and

toured around the country. I then wrote another solo play, this time about my grandmother which was also very successful and toured around NZ a couple of times. After that I wanted to challenge myself a bit more, so I wrote a play about Francis Hodgkins, then another about Lucia Joyce. As I went on, I got more skilled at writing them. So, seven plays later, here I am! And I love it! I love it as much as dancing. And I guess the point of difference is that in every play I've written there is dance. I find that as a playwright, you can often say something more succinctly in movement; it might take you three pages of a script whereas in 30 seconds of dance, I can express a feeling or an idea, so there's always that movement element in whatever I do.

### **You received a Fulbright award in 1993. Can you tell me about your Fulbright experience and any key lessons you learnt during it?**

The grant came about while I was working at the College of Education running the Performing Arts Programme there. I worked very closely with Keri Kaa who was in the Māori Studies department at the College and was a renowned educator. With Keri's guidance, I educated myself about Te Ao Māori, and as a consequence of that Keri, myself, and Sunny Amey did three bicultural shows together: *Wahine Toa*, *Takitoru*, and *Sing Whale!* He Apakura Tohora.

I wanted to broaden my horizons and think about how I operate in a multicultural world. My Fulbright grant initially took me to Native American communities. I went to the Southwest in Arizona, and New Mexico, and I had some wonderful interchanges with people of the Navajo nation who had learnt a lot from us about Kōhanga Reo, so there were many connections. Because I was at the beginning of this journey with Keri, Fulbright gave me the launching pad that I needed.

When you walk into another culture you learn so much. When Keri and I presented a paper in Hawai'i we were trying to model the bicultural partnership through dance so we often did presentations together. Fulbright was a wonderful way of broadening out that world for me and what the possibilities were. I was enormously grateful to get the Fulbright award and it certainly fed into the idea of empowerment and community. It's a very powerful thing.

## FULBRIGHT NZ EVENTS THANKSGIVING 2020

Every year Fulbright NZ celebrate Thanksgiving at Camperdown, the US Ambassador's residence in Lower Hutt.

Normally this gives us the opportunity to hear from our US grantees who would typically be finishing up their awards and preparing to go back to the US. However, as we all know so well, 2020 has not been a typical year. Covid meant that most of our US Fulbright cohort were required to return to the US in March, not long after they arrived. However, despite the turmoil of 2020, there is still plenty to be grateful for, especially in Aotearoa. So, this year we decided to bring together our NZ cohort of Fulbrighters who haven't yet been able to travel to the US.

Grantees gathered at the Fulbright office early

on Wednesday. For many, this was the first time they'd seen each other since the Fulbright Awards in early August. US alumni Noah Collins (White Mountain Apache, Cherokee Nation) joined the meeting via Zoom and shared a Native American perspective on Thanksgiving with the group. After arriving at Camperdown guests were treated to a tour of the premises and of course, classic Thanksgiving fare of turkey with all the trimmings. A big thank you to the Ambassador and his wife Gail and the staff at the US Embassy for going out of their way for us and for making it such a special occasion.

## CAMPUS ADVISORS ANNUAL MEETING 2020

On 3 November, Fulbright NZ held our annual Campus Advisors meeting.

It was wonderful to gather people together (virtually) to hear what has been happening in universities across the country. We are incredibly grateful to our Campus Advisors who freely offer their time, knowledge, and first-hand experience of the Fulbright programme to interested parties.

A warm welcome to Dr Rick Henry from the University of Auckland who has just joined us. Rick held a Fulbright Graduate Award in 2008.

For more details about Fulbright Campus Advisors see [www.fulbright.org.nz](http://www.fulbright.org.nz) or [click here](#).

## ZEALANDIA

As we head towards Christmas, the team decided it was time to pause and reflect on the events of 2020. What better backdrop than the stunning surroundings of Zealandia, Wellington's own urban ecosanctuary, to breathe and take stock.

TOP LEFT: A Thanksgiving toast with US Ambassador Scott Brown  
TOP RIGHT: US Ambassador and Embassy staff with Fulbrighters and FBNZ staff at Camperdown, the Ambassador's residence in Lower Hutt

MIDDLE LEFT: FBNZ grantee Riz Nurmuhammed and Leslie Núñez Goodman from the US Embassy

MIDDLE RIGHT: Nicole Edwards, Isobel Campbell, Gail Brown, Guled Mire, Erena Wikaire

BOTTOM: The Fulbright team (minus Therese Lloyd) at Zealandia

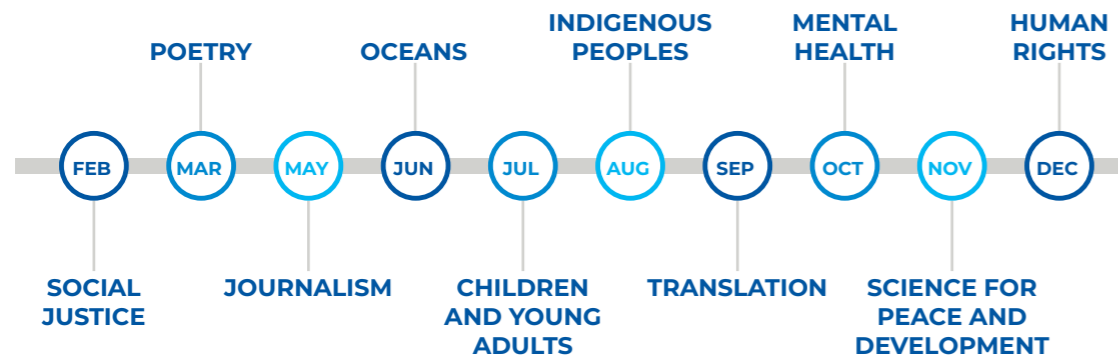


# FULBRIGHT GOOD WORKS – A SERIES OF MONTHLY SEMINARS

Fulbright New Zealand is proud to announce **Fulbright Good Works** – monthly seminars that showcase the continuing good work of our Fulbright alumni.

These seminars will be alumni driven and held either in the Fulbright Wellington office or virtually.

We are seeking expressions of interest from both NZ and US Fulbright alumni who can present on any of the following subjects:



We welcome seminars of any nature, such as lectures, Pecha Kucha, panel discussions, multimedia, storytelling, or performance. Seminars can be up to 60 minutes long.

To register your interest, please email [comms@fulbright.org.nz](mailto:comms@fulbright.org.nz) with a brief summary of your presentation and in which month you will be presenting. Please also include the year and title of your Fulbright award.





Jamie, Chloe and Pip posing in the newly updated library

## SPRING RENEWAL

Spring felt like such a relief this year, and it seemed to bring with it a sense of hope and renewal.

At Fulbright NZ we were reminded how incredibly fortunate we are to live in a largely Covid-free country. We decided to celebrate the turning of the season by brightening things up around the place. Sarita and Jamie organized a living wall, new plants, and an upgrade to a tired and underutilized library space. It might not seem like a lot, but it has breathed life into the office and made us all feel just that little bit more hopeful about the future.

We also welcome Chloe LeMunyan, Fulbright's former EA extraordinaire who has returned to the Fulbright office temporarily to help with some ongoing projects. Welcome back Ms Chloe!



Plant life



The return of Chloe LeMunyan



## KAI AND KORERO

# MORNING TEA GUESTS

October and November were especially great for visits. It was lovely to tea and quiz with Fulbright alumni Nick Goodson (Science and Innovation Grad 2019), Injy Johnstone (Science and Innovation Grad 2019), Hazelle Tomlin (Science and Innovation Grad 2017) and her colleague from the Ministry of Primary Industries Rebecca Evans, and current grantee Elyjana Roach (General Grad 2020).



TOP LEFT: FBNZ 2019 Science and Innovation grad Nick Goodson with FBNZ staff

TOP RIGHT: FBNZ 2020 General grad Elyjana Roach (third from right), with FBNZ team

MIDDLE: Rebecca Evans from the Ministry of Primary Industries, Pip Climo (FBNZ Programme Manager) and FBNZ 2017 Science and Innovation grad Hazelle Tomlin

BOTTOM: FBNZ 2019 Science and Innovation grad Injy Johnstone (seated)

## WANT TO JOIN US?

EMAIL ALUMNI@FULBRIGHT.ORG.NZ

We always welcome those in the neighbourhood to drop by and join us for a morning cuppa and the Dom Post quiz. Drop us an email at alumni@fulbright.org.nz if you plan on stopping by and we'll make sure there's enough coffee in the pot.

# KNOW A FUTURE FULBRIGHTER?

Fulbright New Zealand offers a range of exchange awards for New Zealand and United States citizens wanting to study, research, teach or present their work in each other's country. We love for our alumni and contacts to share their experiences, and spread the word about our programme to potential applicants.

## AWARD TYPE

Fulbright New Zealand General Graduate Awards  
Fulbright Science & Innovation Graduate Awards  
Fulbright-EQC Graduate Award in Natural Disaster Research  
Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Graduate Award  
Fulbright Specialist Awards  
Fulbright US Scholar Awards  
Fulbright New Zealand Scholar Awards  
Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Scholar Award  
Fulbright US Graduate Awards  
Fulbright-Scholar in Residence Program  
Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Programme for US Teachers  
Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Programme for NZ Teachers  
John F. Kennedy Memorial Fellowship

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

1 August annually  
1 August annually  
1 August annually  
1 August annually  
1 August and 1 April annually  
16 September annually  
1 October annually  
1 October annually  
9 October annually  
14 October annually  
20 January annually  
15 March annually  
By appointment only

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