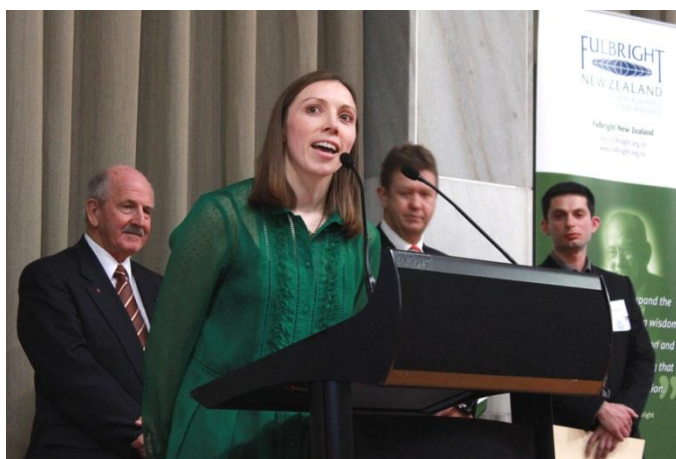


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MEDIA RELEASE

Fulbright New Zealand marks anniversary year with record number of grantees

Fulbright New Zealand marked its 65th anniversary last night by honouring a record annual cohort of exchange grantees. 83 New Zealand and US graduate students, academics, artists and professionals were honoured as Fulbright grantees at the organisation's 2013 awards ceremony at parliament, which doubled as a celebration of Fulbright New Zealand's 65th anniversary year. Fulbright New Zealand was founded by bilateral treaty in 1948 to promote mutual understanding through educational and cultural exchanges between New Zealand and the United States of America, and has since granted more than 3,000 exchange awards to citizens of both countries.



American Fulbright alumna Siobhan O'Kane reflects on her exchange experience to New Zealand

At last night's event, host minister Hon Steven Joyce and the US Ambassador to New Zealand, Hon David Huebner, both paid tribute to the Fulbright programme as a long-standing example of bilateral co-operation and an important driver of academic excellence and leadership in the two partner countries. A crowd of around 300 supporters attended to celebrate the 65th anniversary and honour this year's grantees, including a large number of alumni from around the country.

Speaking as part of a panel of alumni from across the decades who reflected on their exchange experiences, American alumna Siobhan O'Kane, who came to New Zealand in 2008 as a Fulbright US Graduate Student and is now Programme Director at the Sir Peter Blake Trust in Auckland, noted that for many participants the Fulbright experience was a life-long one. As Auckland regional co-ordinator of the alumni-driven Fulbright New Zealand Alumni Association, she noted that "Fulbrighters are bound together by a special enthusiasm, passion and curiosity, and big bold ideas. A Fulbright award is not a one-off reward. It's the seed of a lifetime of enrichment through story-telling, knowledge building and the support of a powerful network."

27 recipients of various Fulbright New Zealand graduate student awards were announced in last night's ceremony. They will study or research in a wide range of fields at the US university of their choice in the coming academic year. Also recognised at the awards ceremony were ten Fulbright US graduate students who are mid-way through their exchange year in New Zealand, 46 recipients of New Zealand and American scholar awards (for academics, artists and professionals), and three participants in the Ian Axford Fellowships programme which Fulbright New Zealand administers.

Fulbright New Zealand will hold further events to celebrate its 65th anniversary around the anniversary date in September, and is actively fundraising throughout the year to create an endowment fund to provide additional awards in future.

ENDS

For more information about this year's Fulbright grantees see the *2013 Fulbright New Zealand Grantees Booklet* – www.fulbright.org.nz/news-publications/publications/granteesbooklet

Portrait photographs of individual grantees are available on request, as are interviews.

Fulbright New Zealand was established in 1948 to promote mutual understanding through educational and cultural exchanges between New Zealand and the United States of America. The Fulbright programme offers a range of prestigious awards for New Zealand and American graduate students, academics, artists and professionals to study, research, teach and present their work in each other's countries. Fulbright New Zealand offers over 70 exchange awards each year – half to students and half to scholars – and more than 3,000 New Zealanders and Americans have benefited from a Fulbright award to date. The programme is mainly funded by the US and New Zealand governments with additional funding from award sponsors, private philanthropists and alumni donors.

See www.fulbright.org.nz for details about Fulbright awards and how to apply, or download a Media Fact Sheet of further background information here: www.fulbright.org.nz/mediafactsheet

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