

December 2021



BRIGHT SPARKS

Cover Story: Guled Mire – Powerful Moments, Lasting Friendships



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THE TEAM



MORGAN BACH
PROGRAMME MANAGER
scholarships1@fulbright.org.nz



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



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



LAUREN SUMMERSELL
PROGRAMME MANAGER
scholarships2@fulbright.org.nz



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

EDITOR’S NOTE

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TO BRIGHT SPARKS

We love hearing about what Fulbright alumni are up to. Help us to celebrate your achievements and milestones, your research and experiences, travel adventures, and more.

Send us your articles, blog posts, photo essays or anything you'd like shared with the Fulbright community. We email Bright Sparks to over 2500 Fulbright New Zealand alumni around the world, plus friends of Fulbright in various sectors across New Zealand.

Email your ideas to alumni@fulbright.org.nz



PENELOPE
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every December issue of Bright Sparks, I welcome the opportunity to reflect on the year and to say thank you to all our friends, whanau, supporters, partners, alumni and grantees. What a year 2021 has been!

While we may have all collectively wished that Covid-19 would be short-lived, it seems that we are slowly waking up to the new reality where the uncertainty inherent to this pandemic has become a part of our daily lives.

Covid-19 has of course impacted the timing and delivery of some of our programmes, and with the country's borders remaining closed, our American Fulbrighters have not yet been able to take up their awards here in Aotearoa. However, we were delighted to be able to welcome our New Zealand 2021 cohort during our three-day long mid-year programme in July, and we were especially thrilled that Covid alert level changes did not affect our Fulbright Awards Ceremony on July 7. This was a wonderful occasion held in the Grand Hall and Legislative Chamber at Parliament and hosted by Minister Phil Twyford.

We were also fortunate to be able to hold our in-person Outreach Programme in May and June. The Fulbright Programme Managers and I thoroughly enjoyed travelling to universities around the country, meeting with Vice Chancellors and university staff and sharing information about the incredible opportunities afforded by a Fulbright scholarship.

Connecting with alumni is always a focus for Fulbright NZ and our monthly Good Works seminars have been a great opportunity to showcase the ongoing research output of alumni. We have been spoilt for choice with the amazing alumni who have been involved thus far. All these seminars are available to view on our [Youtube](#) page. We have a wonderful lineup of speakers for the 2022 Good Works series so keep an eye out on our social media pages for details.

This year also marks the 75-year anniversary of the global Fulbright Program, and Fulbright commissions everywhere have hosted special events to celebrate. Visual artists make up an important group in our community of alumni and we decided to celebrate this with a special panel discussion featuring three prominent artists: Anne Noble, Leanne Williams, and Steve Carr. Check out page 18 for more details.

Around the office we said farewell to Programme Manager Pip Climo and Corporate Services Manager Julie Williams, both of whom had been with Fulbright for over 5 years. Pip will be sharing her wealth of knowledge of running scholarships in a newly formed position at MFAT, and Julie is enjoying a well-earned retirement travelling around the country. Morgan Bach is doing a brilliant job as our new Programme Manager and we also want to say a huge congratulations to Programme Manager Magnolia Wilson and her family who welcomed baby Walter to the world on 15 November! While Magnolia is on parental leave, we are in the very capable hands of Lauren Summersell who has recently arrived in New Zealand from the UK where she worked in student programme administration at University College London.

There have been some changes to the Fulbright Board with Wendy Larner, Provost of Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, taking over the role of Chair from Harlene Hayne earlier in the year. You can read a fantastic interview with Wendy in the Spring issue of [Bright Sparks](#). And just this month we were thrilled to welcome [Dr Rangi Matamua](#) to the Board.

It has been another busy year and we are all so grateful to everyone who has been a part of it.

Best wishes to you all for a safe and relaxing summer holiday!

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PO Box 3465
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

www.fulbright.org.nz

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It's always wonderful when Fulbright alumni and grantees connect around the world. Pictured from left: FBNZ 2021 Science and Innovation grad Sam Yoon, US Fulbright alumna Cara Lembo, 2021 General Grad Elyjana Roach, and US Fulbright alumnus Josh Feast caught up for lunch at Josh's house in Boston MA.



Fulbright alumna **Prof Edwina Pio** from AUT wrote an opinion piece for Stuff about the importance of universities taking a more proactive role in stemming the possibilities of radicalisation amongst young, disenfranchised students. You can read the full article [here](#).



Tina Barton, (Fulbright NZ Travel Award 2008) wrote an insightful article about the challenges for arts funding in Aotearoa. Click [here](#) to read the article. Tina Barton was also the chair of our recent event to celebrate the global 75th anniversary of the Fulbright Programme. See page 18 for details.



Congratulations to two Fulbright NZ alumni from the 2015 cohort, both University of Otago alumni: **Dr Tim Chambers** (above) and **Dr Calum Rickard** (left). Dr Chambers was recently awarded an Accelerator Grant which will help him continue his current research investigating the public health impacts of contaminated drinking water and looking at links between nitrate and adverse health outcomes.

Dr Rickard was one of this years 20Twenties Young Alumni Awardees. These are given to Otago alumni who have demonstrated outstanding achievements, contributed widely to their communities, or have shown exceptional leadership in their personal or professional lives. Dr Rickard received this for his contribution to the mathematics, triathlon and student communities.

WHAT'S NEW IN PRINT FROM FULBRIGHT ALUMNI

- Congratulations to **Anne Noble** (Fulbright Scholar 2013) whose gorgeous new book *Conversātiō – in the company of bees* has just been published by Massey University Press. *Conversātiō* explores Noble's photography practice against the issues of ecosystem collapse and climate change. The book includes essays and Anne's extraordinary photographic images.
- Amongst many other talents, US Fulbright graduate **Lindsey Pointer** is also a children's book author. Lindsey studied Public Administration at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington for her Fulbright award in 2016. Her book *Wally and Freya* is the first in a series of children's picture books on restorative justice from Good Books in the US.
- Fulbright grads and alum get their research published often, but there is nothing quite as thrilling as that very first PhD publication. Well done Fulbright Science and Innovation Grantee **Emily Gordon** on your work in Geophysical Research Letters. Click [here](#) to read.



It was wonderful to see Fulbrighters featuring on the recently announced 2021 Royal Society Te Apārangi Research Honours Aotearoa list. To read the full list of awardees click [here](#).



- **Prof Linda Waimarie Nikora** FRSNZ (Tūhoe, Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti), co-director of Ngā Pae o Te Maramatanga has been awarded the Te Rangi Hiroa medal for her work in transforming psychology for Māori and Aotearoa by indigenising the discipline. Read the full story [here](#).



- **Professor Gary Wilson** from GNS Science was awarded the Thomson Medal for leadership in developing New Zealand's international profile in Antarctic research. Read more [here](#). Prof Wilson was a Fulbright NZ Graduate awardee in 1991.



- **Dr Laura Revell**, University of Canterbury, has been awarded the Cooper Award for her chemistry-climate interaction modelling work and pioneering research on understanding how microplastics might impact Earth's climate. Read more [here](#). Dr Revell was a Fulbright NZ Scholar in 2011.

HAVE YOU JOINED FULBRIGHTER?

Fulbrighter was launched in 2019 and is an exclusive online networking platform specifically designed for Fulbright alumni and grantees. It is a space where you can share your news and events, build relationships, or collaborate on projects. To register for Fulbrighter visit <https://fulbrighternetwork.com/signup>

Fulbrighter is also available as an app for iOS and Android.

POWERFUL MOMENTS, LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

Guled Mire was awarded a Fulbright NZ General Graduate award in 2020. He is now living in New York and completing his Masters at Cornell University. He shared some of his Fulbright journey with us so far.

Like many of my fellow Fulbrighters, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that I had to start my Master of Public Administration at Cornell University online in New Zealand until I could safely move to the United States.

This resulted in a unique set of challenges for each and every one of us. It meant learning to live with ambiguity and navigating the uncertainty that came with the pandemic.

It also meant having to make a tremendous amount of sacrifice and learning to cope with new ways of learning across different time zones, something I was able to navigate with the support of my peers and professors.

Next month marks the one-year anniversary of my arrival to the United States. It is fair to say my journey so far has been nothing short of life-changing and rewarding. I have been able to harness many of the benefits associated with the Fulbright international exchange experience. Cornell University's success in keeping its student body safe from COVID-19 has played a key in making this a reality.

In the classroom, I have been challenged to be intellectually curious and to think creatively about policy solutions to crucial issues concerning social policy and public administration in general. In doing so, I have learned fresh new perspectives and insights that will no doubt inform

my approach to undertaking policy analysis and research in the years to come.

Outside the classroom, I have been able to reap the benefits of cultural exchange. For example, over the summer break, I took part in a civil rights trail across the Southern states of Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, visiting sites of historical significance and learning about the struggles African Americans faced in the pursuit of justice and equality. In particular, walking across the iconic Edmund Pettus Bridge where Martin Luther King Jr. once led activists marching for voting rights was an inspiring and powerful experience that I will always cherish.

Another exciting aspect of my experience so far has been the chance to try new activities. I did not expect to enjoy pumpkin carving and attending ice hockey games as much as I have!

Most importantly, I have been fortunate enough to build connections with diverse future public policy leaders. It has been inspiring to be surrounded by like-minded individuals committed to shaping a better world through their professional policy careers and advocacy work.

As I embark on the last leg of my studies, I look forward to further learning, growing and maximising the opportunities associated with international exchange.



A NEW INTER-LOCAL BY ELYJANA ROACH

"I received my Fulbright award in 2020 and was one of a handful of our cohort who started their awards online. While it wasn't exactly what I'd planned, I was based in Northland at the time, so I did have the luxury of walking across the road to the beautiful beach in Ahipara at the end of my zoom classes."



This year however, I'm here, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This means that home, for now, looks a little different. "Glocal," or, "inter-local" as I like to say, has weaved its way into my experiences living here in the States. For example:

- I am studying at Harvard's Graduate School of Design which is based in Gund Hall. The building was originally designed by an Australian architect which instantly made me feel nostalgic. One tick for inter-local.
- Starting my Master of Architecture in Urban Design online meant that our cohort had not been able to fully bond. This called for a gathering. My housemate, who is also in my cohort and a Fulbright student from Peru, seized the opportunity to cook a dinner for the people we'd only met on screens. It was the first time most of our cohort had been together in person. Five ticks for inter-local.
- The Urban Design programme has an uncanny number of connections to Aotearoa New Zealand. Out of a teaching team of eight, four have connections to home; Professor Peter Rowe (who used to be the Dean of the School and who now oversees the Urban Design programme) was born in Wellington; the main instructor, Yun Fu, grew up in Christchurch (and went to high school with my old work colleague!); another instructor's partner is from Auckland, and then there's me! This makes for some entertaining and fun times. Ten ticks for inter-local.

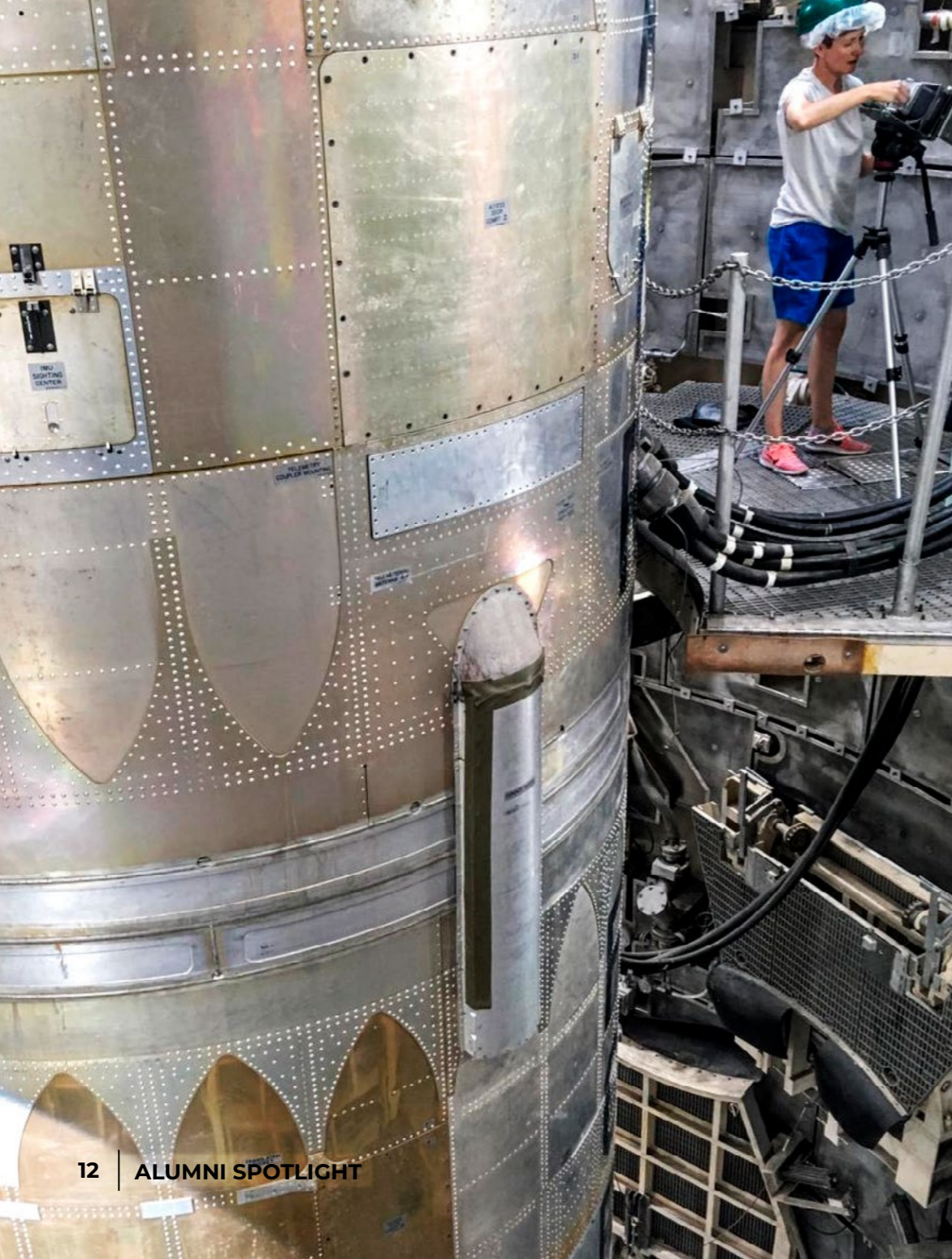
There are plenty of opportunities to be involved in the extra-curricular activities going on in the school. I've been actively engaged in both the Harvard Indigenous Design Collective (HIDC), and the UD:ID – the Harvard Graduate School of Design Student Journal for expanding the conversations in the urban design field. Through the HIDC, I had the opportunity to facilitate and moderate the school-wide Public Lecture given by Jade Kake, director of Matakahe Architecture and Urbanism based in Whangārei. Because it was online, people from all around the world were able to attend, including people from the Philippines, Canada and India. It was a poignant moment to be in the US contributing to an important conversation about designing for Indigenous communities

in a context such as Aotearoa.

Through UD:ID, I have facilitated interviews with various practitioners from around the world. These interviews are set up as informal conversations where we discuss different perspectives on designing cities and neighbourhoods with the complexities of infrastructure, housing, specific geographies, economic challenges, architectural pedagogy and so on. Amongst these interviews have been practitioners based in Sao Paulo, Dubai, Dominican Republic, New York, and even Aotearoa New Zealand. I reached out to Auckland-based urban strategists, The Urban Advisory group (TUA) who are doing some really interesting work in our part of the world. The discussions we had have fed into further research about the future of neighbourhoods in New Zealand and alternative models of housing. It also connects with another stream of my research around housing for Māori and rangatahi, and Pacific communities.

Being here has highlighted to me how small our world really is, and that there are so many conversations to be had and connections to be made. And that's a huge tick for inter-local.





CREATIVE RESPONSIVENESS AND RESEARCH CHALLENGES BY FIONA AMUNDSEN

FBNZ Scholar alumna and visual artist Fiona Amundsen discovers fascinating parallels between her research while on award and the ongoing lessons of Covid-19.

The idea of freely travelling to another country without the worry of snap border closures and MIQ availability seems like a totally different world. That said, there are strong connections between what I had planned to research in the US, what I actually researched, and the necessarily restrictive events of now. My proposed research was to explore relationships between military capitalism, nuclear imperialism and socio-economic emancipation. I was interested in producing artworks that brought together archival and present-day filming and photographs connected to Hunters Point Naval Shipyard (San Francisco)—a decommissioned WWII and Cold War nuclear research facility that is undergoing clean up so the land can be used for housing. My research was concerned with how a camera could be employed to imagine an alternative future where the strategies of military production are refashioned to align with ideals of socio-economic equality and justice.

Right at the time I was applying and being interviewed for the Fulbright Scholar Award (November 2018), Hunters Point was undergoing a mass scandal which was becoming public. In short, a company hired by the US Navy had falsified soil samples, declaring radiation levels much lower than they actually were. As a result of this scandal and public safety, security tightened at Hunters Point and access became virtually impossible. In January 2019 (and the months that followed) I started writing to the Navy, local historians, San Francisco City Council members, and development companies based at the site about gaining special access to film and photograph. Despite numerous attempts, I could not gain access to Hunters Point. I was left with a set of interconnecting ideas, but no way to visualize them.

Although I understood that researching is a

process of evolving change, I was devastated by this turn of events. I was not ready to give up that project. Also, I was concerned with how I would deliver what I had proposed and honor the incredible opportunities that Fulbright was affording me. There are loose comparisons between what this situation asked of me, and what Covid-19 is asking of us as a society. Just like our ever-evolving pandemic context calls for fluidity and creative responsiveness, I too had to find that within myself in order to realize my Fulbright research. I had to work with what was imposed on me by forces outside of my control. This work involved being adaptive and open to not only how my project could develop, but how I could evolve alongside it. At the time, I did not realize how invaluable this learning would be to our present cultural moment.

The Hunters Point circumstances forced me to radically rethink my research. While the core interests of my project—military capitalism, nuclear imperialism and socio-economic emancipation—remained unchanged, my approach adapted. I became interested in scholarship concerning the Nuclear Guardianship Movement, utopian models for communal living, and alternative ecologies. (The Nuclear Guardianship Movement comes from Joanna Macy, an anti-nuclear activist, environmental activist, author, scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory, and deep ecologist. Active during the height of the Cold War era nuclear arms race, Macy developed the Nuclear Guardianship Movement which explores how to be present to not only that which is invisible, such as radiation, but also to the seemingly intractable issue of human-caused nuclear contamination and environmental devastation. Although Macy initially developed her scholarship in the late 1970s onwards (see *Despair and Personal Power*

in the Nuclear Age, 1983), her ideas and thinking remain highly relevant to today’s cultural time where we struggle to find ways to live with and care for each other.) I started to speculate on what these seemingly disparate interests could teach us about humanity and the processes required to care for each other and assume a sacred responsibility for life and living. I realized that there was a strong link between the blurry lines of world-building and world-destroying impulses that are embedded within military capitalist and nuclear imperialist ideologies. It is this blurry line that my Fulbright research pivots.

My Fulbright award enabled me to work within a variety of places—across California and Arizona—that ranged from the NASA Ames Research Center (with its specific focus on Cold War supersonic jet technology); the Titan II Missile Museum (a Cold War nuclear missile that now functions as a museum); Biosphere 2 (the world’s largest closed experimental ecological system, which tried to replicate earth’s biomes so that human life could be supported and maintained in Outer Space); Blackbird Airpark (a museum display of the Cold War era SR-71 supersonic jet); and Arcosanti (a 1970s architectural and ecological communal living experiment). I filmed, photographed and conversed in these places. I recorded the stories of Joanna Macy, ‘citizens’ of the Arcosanti community, a former Titan II Commanding Officer, a former Blackbird SR71 pilot, and a former photographer who documented many of the Cold War era nuclear tests in Nevada. At the core of all my encounters was the ongoing questioning of how a series of photographic and video artworks could establish a hopeful image for the future.

I returned to Aotearoa New Zealand in December 2019, not long before Covid-19 would take over the world. As I started to prepare an exhibition linked to my Fulbright research, I began making connections to what was unfolding in early 2020 and the places, communities and ideas that I had explored in the US. The exhibition, titled *Human Hand*, brought together the three seemingly disparate sites of Arcosanti, Biosphere 2 and the Titan II Missile. (The exhibition was developed in collaboration with Tim Corballis and was held at the Dowse Art Museum from 6th June to 11th October 2020.) All of these places are about, in some

way, locking out the world in order to protect and preserve life. While Biosphere 2 and the Titan II Missile are connected via related imperial and capitalist doctrine, it is the ideology that drove Arcosanti which perhaps has the most to offer our current situation. This micro-city was designed with architectural and ecological principles that valued living for the common good. When I visited Arcosanti I met and recorded Sue Kirsch, who has lived there since the 1970s and helped to literally build Arcosanti. Sue talked about how Arcosanti was developed by a community who worked collectively to build something beyond their own individual needs. As she says, “we were doing something that in our minds was for humankind; we were going to set an example, not only of a new type of architecture but also of an effort of love.” These words have really stayed with me. In light of all that has occurred since returning from my Fulbright experience, I keep coming back to her words, to “an effort of love”.

On reflection, Fulbright New Zealand afforded me much more than the opportunity to develop and produce a new research project. Rather, my Fulbright experience has shown me how to embed the kinds of values that perhaps Senator J. William Fulbright imagined when he so famously proposed that the purpose of the organization was to “bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship”. It is now with an “effort of love” that I approach my ongoing research concerning the blurry lines between world-building and world-destroying impulses.



EMPTY GESTURES

Featured in E-Tangata on August 15 2021 and reprinted with permission

The government’s Dawn Raids apology didn’t go nearly far enough, argues Dylan Asafo, a lecturer at Auckland Law School. This is a critique of the government’s apology for the Dawn Raids.

To be clear, nothing in this critique expresses any criticism of Pacific peoples who felt a sense of healing from the apology, especially our Pacific elders who lived through the Dawn Raids in the 1970s. Nor does anything here criticise any members of our Pacific communities who advocated for the apology or worked hard behind the scenes to make the apology event happen in good faith.

Rather, this critique is aimed at the people in government who hold institutional power. Or, to put it another way, the people who had the power and resources to make the apology an opportunity for genuine change for Pacific peoples but chose to waste the opportunity to preserve the racist status quo.

In my view, these people crafted a fake apology to “respond” to calls for an apology, all without making any real changes to demonstrate an adequate appreciation of what the Dawn Raids did — and is still doing — to our Pacific communities.

To pull this fake apology off, the “apology state-

ment” needed to carefully frame the impacts of the Dawn Raids as mostly (or purely) mental and psychological, as follows:

“While these events took place almost 50 years ago, the legacy of the Dawn Raids era lives on today in Pacific communities . . . It remains vividly etched in the memory of those who were directly impacted; it lives on in the disruption of trust and faith in authorities, and it lives on in the unresolved grievances of Pacific communities that these events happened and that to this day they have gone unaddressed.”

What is clearly missing from this statement is any acknowledgment of the material and systemic impacts of the Dawn Raids era.

These impacts not only include the poverty that Pacific families experienced following the deportations of their working whānau. They also include laws and policies that continue to deny Pacific peoples the ability to live their lives with dignity, such as the Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982 which extinguished citizenship rights for Sāmoans born in Sāmoa between 1920–1948 — and

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the inequitable pathways to permanent residency for Pacific peoples.

The prime minister also deliberately failed to mention that the racist policing of Māori and Pacific peoples (undeniably strengthened in the Dawn Raids era) endures today — where Māori are almost eight times more likely than Pākehā to be the victims of police violence, with Pacific peoples three times more likely.

Therefore, by carefully describing the Dawn Raids as a one-time thing that only really had psychological impacts, the government's superficial and inadequate "gestures" for "reconciliation" that followed the apology statement could be seen as reasonable or even generous.

The "gestures" include "\$2.1 million in academic and vocational scholarships to be available to Pacific communities" and "\$1 million in Manaaki New Zealand Short Term Scholarship Training Courses for delegates from Sāmoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Fiji".

While these scholarships are essential, they miss the point. The Dawn Raids were not just about a lack of educational opportunities for Pacific peoples. They were, and remain, about Pacific peoples being treated like disposable tools of labour for white profit, worthy of police violence and unworthy of citizenship and permanent residency.

Right now, thousands of Pacific peoples (and other marginalised people of colour) need amnesty for overstaying their temporary visas, and accessible pathways to permanent residency.

They've been denied these pathways because of the enduring racist legacy of the Dawn Raids in our immigration laws (and other interconnected legacies of white supremacy in Aotearoa). This is why Pacific community advocates have been calling for this action to accompany the apology months before the apology was made.

While neither the prime minister nor anyone else in government acknowledged these calls for genuine change, Her Royal Highness Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu Kalaniuvalu Fotofili honoured these calls by telling the prime minister directly: "The vā could be better and complete, should the government promptly respond to the immigration-related needs of the community."

The relatively small amount of funding for these scholarships is also, quite frankly, insult-

ing. By comparison, the government recently provided \$5 million of initial funding to help ensure members of Team New Zealand could not be snapped up by rival wealthy syndicates for the next America's Cup.

To me, \$1 or 2.1 million in scholarships feels more like what was left over after everything the government truly cared about had been taken care of, rather than a genuine offering to advance the position of Pacific peoples in the Pacific Islands and Aotearoa.

The government's third "gesture" is to provide resources to schools and kura who "choose to teach the history of the Dawn Raids, which would include histories of those directly affected".

The keyword here is "choose" — a clear accommodation for racists in the education system who have no interest in helping to ensure that future leaders of the country can learn about the Dawn Raids so that they never happen again.

The last "gesture" accompanying the apology is to "provide support to enable Pacific artists and/or historians to work with communities to develop a comprehensive historical record of account of the Dawn Raids period as an additional goodwill gesture of reconciliation".

While a historical record is important, what is needed is an independent inquiry. This inquiry should then result in a report of recommendations for reform and redress by the government, which would then allow for a true reckoning with the impacts of the Dawn Raids on Pacific peoples.

Overall, the inadequacies of the government's "gestures" indicate that the apology came from a government that felt pressured to give an apology — and not a government that was genuinely invested in atoning for its ongoing actions of racist violence.

In my view, those in power were well aware that the grace and humility of Pacific peoples — and the underlying power imbalances between Pacific communities and the government — would lead to the apology being accepted without any real debate or negotiation.

Sadly, these people in power included several of our Pacific government ministers and MPs, who have shown (once again) that they are more committed to incremental equality in the settler-colonising state than the full liberation of the most vulnerable in our communities.



Ultimately, the apology served as an opportunity to continue the facade of a "diverse" and "kind" government while also maintaining the racist immigration and policing structures that oppress Māori, Pacific peoples, and other people of colour every day.

And therein lies the danger of fake apologies from settler-colonising states. They are never offered to ensure that state-sanctioned violence against Indigenous peoples and other people of colour never happens again. Rather, the real function of these apologies is to strengthen the settler-colonising state and reinforce the faux legitimacy of its white supremacist institutions.

As Kennedy Warne wrote in regards to the Crown's apologies to iwi as a part of Treaty settlements:

"One of the problems with apologies is that they can reinforce the power relations that led to the offences in the first place. . . . Settler governments, of course, are rarely willing to exchange power, least of all to previously colonised Indigenous people. . . .The problem is that, short of recognising the independent and alternative sovereignty of Indigenous people, there can be no guarantee that history won't repeat itself . . ."

Another danger of fake apologies from settler-colonising states is that they can limit the imaginations of Indigenous and other people of colour as to what is possible and what is deserved. Instead of being able to imagine futures of dignity, joy and liberation for all, fake apologies put pressure on us to be thankful for the crumbs of freedom that those leading the settler-colonising state are willing to give us when it suits them.

Therefore, the government's apology for the Dawn Raids should serve as another reminder (to those of us who needed it, including me) that we will never see equity for everyone in Aotearoa under a system in which the Crown dictates power relations and tino rangatiratanga is denied to Māori as tangata whenua of Aotearoa.

For non-Māori Pacific peoples, this follows that we need to reject fake and tokenistic gestures for "reconciliation" from the government and instead push for constitutional transformation grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Such transformation would finally provide decolonial justice to our Māori whānaunga and allow for power and resources in Aotearoa to be equitably redistributed.

Thankfully, plans for constitutional transformation have already been explored in two brilliant reports, Matike Mai and He Puapua, in which experts provide robust ideas about how Aotearoa can finally reach its potential as a fair and just nation for everyone.

It is when we can collectively push the government to implement these ideas that we will finally be able to "pave a new dawn and a new beginning" for Aotearoa.

Fuimaono Dylan Asafo is a lecturer at Auckland Law School, University of Auckland, where he specialises in racial justice and Pacific legal issues. He is a Fulbright scholar with a Master of Laws from Harvard University. Dylan was born in Melbourne, Australia, and raised in West Auckland. His family is from the villages of Salani, Satalo, Siumu, Moata'a, and Leufisa in Sāmoa.



FULBRIGHT NZ CELEBRATES THE GLOBAL FULBRIGHT 75TH ANNIVERSARY

2021 marks 75 years since Senator William J. Fulbright introduced the ground-breaking legislation that laid the foundation for the Fulbright programme; a programme which has gone on to be one of the most prestigious and longest running international educational exchanges in the world.

Throughout the year, Fulbright Commissions all around the world have marked the occasion by hosting talks and events on a variety of subjects. For our part, we decided to shine a light on the role of visual arts in the Fulbright programme. Over the years, Fulbright NZ has awarded hundreds of scholarships to visual artists, and it was wonderful to bring together three of these eminent artists for this event.

The panel discussion was led by art historian and Fulbright alumna Christina Barton and featured artists Steve Carr (Fulbright-Wallace Arts Trust Award, 2013), Leanne Williams (Fulbright NZ Scholar, 2008), and Anne Noble (Fulbright NZ Scholar, 2013.)

To view the recording of the event, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3piXDac9CA&t=11s>





FULBRIGHT NZ GOOD WORKS ALUMNI SERIES

Fulbright NZ Good Works continues to be a highlight on the events calendar! Since the last issue of Bright Sparks we've hosted optometrist-scientist Dr Stuti Misra on the latest eye imaging techniques; Dr Manulani Aluli Meyer from the University of Hawai'i on the significance of the Makahiki Season; and international lawyer and human rights activist Rez Gardi on the work that she is currently doing in Iraq building cases for the prosecution of ISIS for their genocidal campaign against the Yezidis.

2022 will be another year full of fascinating talks and presentations by Fulbright NZ and US alumni so keep an eye out on our social media pages for details.

All talks are available to view on the Fulbright NZ Youtube channel.

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.



HAPPY RETIREMENT JULIE!

Julie Williams, Fulbright NZ's Corporate Services Manager has retired after 6 years in the role. Julie is a keen outdoors person and will be spending her retirement hiking and tramping all around Aotearoa. All of us here at Fulbright wish her the best of luck and a happy retirement!

Programme Manager Magnolia Wilson recently took parental leave and filling in for her while she's away is Lauren Summersell. Lauren moved to Wellington from the UK earlier in the year and has previously worked in scholarships at University College London.

With a lockdown thrown in the mix, and various Covid restrictions in place, we haven't been able to have many morning tea visitors, so we were very happy when Ngarangi Haerewa (pictured second from left with Penelope Borland, Morgan Bach and Jamie Robertson) was able to stop by. Ngarangi was awarded a Fulbright NZ General Graduate Award in 2020 and will soon be heading off to UC Berkeley to complete a Master of Public Policy.



FRED FASTIER – 1920-2021

The Fulbright NZ team were saddened to hear of Fred Fastier's passing on July 23 at the age of 101. Fred was one of the earliest recipients of a Fulbright NZ Research Scholar Award in 1951 and visited the State University of New York where he studied pharmacology. Fred went on to teach pharmacology at the University of Otago between 1949 and 1980 and was the university's inaugural professor of Pharmacology. Fred's cousin Lyle Fastier was also a Fulbrighter and was in the very first cohort of Fulbright NZ grantees to go to the US in 1949. Thank you to Jane Begley, Lyle Fastier's daughter who got in touch to tell us about this connection and Fred's passing. We decided to find out more about Fred's award and retrieved Fred's post-award report from the Fulbright archives. Fred made some wonderful observations about his time in the States. We particularly liked this comment:

"I travelled over the country mainly by bus. This method of transport is not only cheap but gives one the opportunity of seeing a great deal more of the country than one sees from a plane or train. Like horse-riding, bus travel takes some getting used to. However, the first thousand miles are the worst."

MARY FAMA: MATHEMATICIAN WHO EXCELLED IN THE FACE OF GREAT PERSONAL LOSS

By Peter Fama and Andrew Duncan

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"They should never have let a woman do it" was a recurrent grumble from traditional coal miners when Dr Mary Fama turned up periodically to check out the application of her analytical work on mine structure. Paradoxically, the collapse of a roof in one Queensland mine followed a manager's disregard of Mary's mathematical calculations and recommendations.

In 1967, Mary had graduated from Harvard University with a PhD in applied mathematics – a singular success at that time for a young Kiwi woman in an academic world of international male students. But by the end of her life, Mary's achievements had become exceptional not only professionally but in her extraordinary resilience in the face of great personal stress and loss.

Born in Windsor, west of London, Mary Duncan was the second in a family of five children. Her parents, Kitty and Jimmy, were devoted Catholics, Jimmy even having spent time in training as a Benedictine monk. Kitty was English, Jimmy of New Zealand-Scottish extraction.

The shadow of war overhung Mary's early childhood. Her father was commissioned in the British Army, and narrowly escaped France through Dunkirk. Later, he became a senior planner in Churchill's war room. Mary's maternal grandparents were killed in the Blitz in 1941, a cruel shock to the family.

When Mary was five years of age, she was sent with her older sister, Anna, to boarding school in Scotland. But in 1947, she was taken with the family to Vienna, where Jimmy was an administrator in the occupying government.

The family eventually migrated to New Zealand when Mary was 10. They lived in Heretaunga and then in northern Upper Hutt.

Mary was a perceptive and intelligent student. She was also both inquisitive and warm-hearted. At Sacred Heart College in Island Bay, she excelled in all her studies and even persuaded the college to

engage for her a special teacher in mathematics – a subject not then considered essential for ladies. In her final year she gained a university scholarship.

Unfortunately, in that year Mary was discovered, with several friends, taking part in a clandestine "midnight feast", which resulted in the brutal confiscation of all her school prizes. She continued to retain a mischievous streak in her character.

It was probably at some time during childhood that Mary contracted undiagnosed pulmonary tuberculosis – a precursor to the lung disease that troubled her much later in adult life.

Subsequently, she completed a BA at the University of Canterbury, and then a BA (class) in mathematics at Oxford University. After her return to New Zealand in 1962, she joined staff at the applied mathematics division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR).

Mary Duncan, as she then was, attended Harvard University on a fellowship, graduating in 1967 with a PhD in applied mathematics.

However, her tertiary education was not complete. With a Fulbright travel grant, a New Zealand Federation of University Women Fellowship, and a Harvard Fellowship, she took off for Harvard, graduating in 1967 with a PhD in applied mathematics at the age of 28.

On her return to New Zealand that year, she resumed work for the DSIR. One of her more curious projects was

the calculation of stress deformity in sewer pipes – an unusual conversational topic at social gatherings, she found.

In 1968, through a mutual friend, she met Peter Fama, a young psychiatrist then working in Auckland. Peter had at that time contracted to return to a job in Australia. But it was love at first sight. The couple married later that year in Sydney, where both had relatives. They lived on the North Shore, and Mary worked as a junior lecturer at the University of Sydney.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable time, until their troubled family life began unhappily with the death of their first child, Paul, who survived premature birth for only a few hours.

Their second child, Michael, arrived in 1970 and, in those early years, was more robust.

Peter himself came from a quite different family background, in which he had been an only child. On one memorable occasion not long after their marriage, he declared imperiously at a dinner party, "I hate sharing!" The guests were visibly stunned at this revelation. But in fact, Peter and Mary's marriage came to last for more than 52 years.

Mary, Peter and Michael returned to New Zealand two years later. Mary once more resumed work with the DSIR. With the new "fast" computers of the time, there had emerged the practical application of the mathematical process of finite element analysis, which Mary with diligence and enterprise applied to problems in the design of coal mines.

Twins Susan and Christopher arrived in 1971. But though they seemed healthy and vigorous, Michael by age 7 could not stand up steadily. His "wobblings" were subsequently diagnosed as the progressive neurological disease Friedreich's ataxia, a hereditary condition caused by a recessive gene.

In 1983, the family returned to Australia to pursue their professional careers further. They settled

this time in Brisbane and stayed there for 27 years.

Mary was appointed senior scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), working at the Queensland Centre for Advanced Technology in western Brisbane – one of only two women scientists in that centre. The research group for which she worked came to lead the world in modelling ground strain and movements in mining.

But at home, from his early teenage years, Michael had to use a wheelchair. And from about that age, the twins had to give up their bicycles. All three children now had Friedreich's ataxia.

The disorder eventually led to incoordination and weakness of all muscles, including those of speech, and eventually affected the children's hearts. Michael died at 27, Susan at 33, Christopher at 36.

The children had all achieved very well in the face of their disabilities. Christopher, like Mary, even completed a PhD in mathematics – this time, the mathematics of black holes, the same speciality as Stephen Hawking. But for the parents, ultimately there were more tears than cheers.

Mary's respiratory problem became evident in the late 1980s, with the diagnosis of bronchiectasis, a progressive lung disease which gradually destroys the walls of the bronchi or breathing tubes.

Mary and Peter eventually retired from work and returned to New Zealand in 2010, settling in Havelock North.

In 2013, Mary suddenly went blind in the left eye. It was discovered this was because of an abscess from her lung bacteria which had lodged behind her eye. She had to travel to Brisbane for neurosurgery.

Repeated courses of antibiotics kept her respiratory symptoms subdued, but finally further complications of bronchiectasis took their toll. She died in Hawke's Bay Hospital on July 6.

It was the end of an extraordinary life. Mary had been a person of warmth and kindness, always wanting the best for everyone. She was a strong, active supporter of charitable projects, and herself founded an enduring Hastings charity that continues to supply warm clothing for school children.

She was resolute in her Christian faith. Strong-willed, even bossy, she nevertheless had a personal charm that endeared her to everyone.



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