

Spring/Summer 2023




# BRIGHT SPARKS

## Cover Story: The Fulbright New Zealand Awards Ceremony 2023



*Also in this issue: New Publications | In the News | In Memoriam | Grantee Experience: From the Land of the Long White Cloud to Turtle Island | Alumni Spotlight: A Pacific prescription? Study to probe kava as trauma treatment | Around the Office*

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In what has so far been a whirlwind year at Fulbright NZ – with a move to fabulous new premises and the return to a new post-COVID normal for us - it is wonderful to bring you this new edition of ‘Bright Sparks’! We hope you enjoy catching up on what has been happening across our Fulbrighter community, as much as we have enjoyed putting these stories together for you. It has been exciting to welcome a huge cohort of more than 50 grantees in 2023 – and to celebrate them at our annual awards ceremony. See page 8 to find out more.

It is also a particularly special year as we mark 75 years of Fulbright in Aotearoa. As we celebrate three quarters of a century of life-changing educational and cultural exchanges between New

Zealand and the United States, we highlight in this ‘Bright Sparks’ the inspiring mahi that is going on right here within our Fulbright community. Whether it is books recently published, research into kava as a way to treat PTSD, or an exploration of the experience of navigating Indigeneity as Fulbrighters – there is a plethora of amazing work to share! We invite you to grab a cuppa and enjoy reading about the highlights and successes of your Fulbright community.




EDITOR’S NOTE

While every effort has been 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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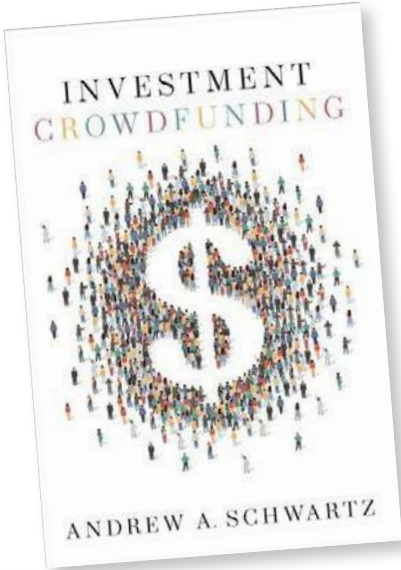
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*LEFT: Fulbright US Graduate Awardees at the 2023 Fulbright NZ Awards Ceremony, Nick Dragone, Madison Emond, Alex Hawley (Diné, Navajo), Kevin Lujan Lee (Chamoru, Familian Capili)*

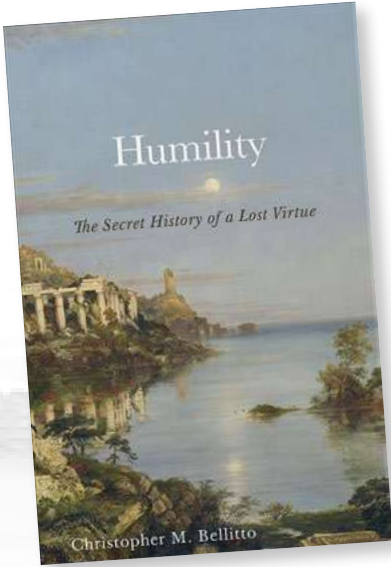


# WHAT'S NEW IN PRINT FROM FULBRIGHT ALUMNI



- According to Fulbright alumnus Professor **Andrew Schwartz**, New Zealand's distinctive legal regime for investment crowdfunding is among the best in the world and should be emulated. Andrew, who is a Professor of Law at the University of Colorado, came to New Zealand in 2017 as a Fulbright Scholar. "The Fulbright had a profound impact on my career and research," says Professor Schwartz. His debut book, 'Investment Crowdfunding', was recently published by Oxford University Press and is based on the research he undertook while in New Zealand.

- When **Christopher Bellitto** was in Aotearoa as a 2019 Fulbright Specialist Award recipient, based at the University of Canterbury, he presented on the subject of humility and also gave a Fulbright NZ Good Works seminar on this topic. Now he's written the book! His book 'Humility: The Secret History of a Lost Virtue' is published by Georgetown University Press.



## And one from the Fulbright team....

- **Morgan Bach** (Fulbright NZ Programme Manager – and a poet!) has recently produced her second collection of poetry. Congratulations, Morgan, on the publication of 'Middle Youth' (Te Herenga Waka University Press).



- We are excited that **Professor Rangi Mātāmua** was named New Zealander of the Year in 2023! We are very proud to have Professor Rangi as a Fulbright-Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga Scholar alumnus, and member of our Board of Directors. Rangi's work in the field of Māori astronomy has been ground-breaking. It is thanks to him that we all have a better understanding of the significance of the Matariki cluster of stars, in particular, and a new public holiday in Aotearoa to honour that special time of year. Ka rawe, Rangi!



Photo credit: Ebony Lamb

- **Jordan Hamel** (2022 Fulbright New Zealand General Graduate Award recipient) is on a roll! He recently won both the 2023 UK New Writers Poetry Competition and the 2023 Sonora Review Poetry Prize. Jordan's work has been published in the November 2023 issue of 'Poetry Magazine'. And while he's not winning awards and having things published, Jordan is busy sharing his knowledge, lecturing first year writing students at the University of Michigan! Kia mau te wehi, Jordan!



# OCTAVIUS JONES

We were saddened to hear of the recent passing of Octavius Jones. Octavius came from San Bernadino County, California to Aotearoa in 2019 on a Fulbright US Graduate Award. His initial studies here focussed on digital storytelling with Māori women on marine conservation projects at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington. After a period back in the US, he later returned to Te Whanganui-a-Tara to work towards his PHD. The following words from Annie Te One (Ngāti Ātiawa, Ngāti Mutunga) perfectly capture what a warm, intelligent and kind person Octavius was. Annie – who is currently in Hawai’i as a Fulbright NZ Scholar - was one of Octavius’ PHD supervisors and a good friend. Our thoughts and aroha are with Octavius’ family and friends. Moe mai rā.

*Octavius was a person who was full of light. He was kind, gentle and thoughtful, and felt so deeply about things concerning to him. He held relationships and friendships with such high regard and was always open for a kōrero with anyone who needed it. As one of his PhD supervisors at Te Kawa a Māui, I was privileged to see and hear about the development of his research which was centred on highlighting African diasporic and Māori voices in understandings of the moana. He cared deeply about addressing academic inequities as well as finding ways that research can privilege unheard stories relating to the environment and climate change. During his time at Te Kawa a Māui he became a part of our whānau and also taught and researched within the school. He had an infectious laugh and was always quick to smile. Octavius will be sorely missed and I know that all who knew and loved him will be heartbroken by his passing. E Octavius, moe mai rā i tō moenga roa e hoa. (rest now my friend)*

Annie Te-One

# GORDON SMITH

We sadly farewell Gordon Smith, who died in May 2023 aged 88. Gordon travelled to the US in 1979 on a Fulbright-Hays Vocational Development Award. It was the first of many visits he made to the US during his life. Gordon went on to be a founding member of the New Zealand Organisation for Quality, and later while teaching at Massey

University in Palmerston North, he founded the NZ CREST (Creativity in Science & Technology) Awards. This was run by Massey for several years before being taken over by the Royal Society. Gordon’s family and friends are in our thoughts.

# SIR JOHN TRIMMER

We sadly farewell legendary New Zealand dance icon, Sir Jon Trimmer. In 1983, Sir Jon received a Fulbright Cultural Development Award to become a guest at the American Ballet Theatre in New York. He was an internationally

acclaimed talent, a wonderful personality, and a great friend and mentor to so many. We send our love to his whānau and friends. Haere ra, Sir Jon!

*This is an extract from Jennifer Shennan’s 2008 book ‘Dancing Fulbrighters: 60 years of dance exchanges on the New Zealand Fulbright Programme’. (Photo: A young Jon Trimmer dancing, by John Ashton, courtesy of Royal New Zealand Ballet)*

## Jon Trimmer

### 1983 Fulbright New Zealand Cultural Development Award American Ballet Theatre

The country’s legendary performer of ballet, Jon Trimmer, first joined The New Zealand Ballet company in 1958, under the founding director, Poul Gnatt

In 2008, after a career of remarkable longevity, Jon remains the company’s leading character dancer, and has brought a deep though quiet sense of leadership to the company’s dancers all those 50 years between.

Jon has been knighted for his lifetime of achievement and service to the arts in New Zealand. He is the first to acknowledge that his wife, Jacqui (née Oswald), dancer and former ballet mistress of the New Zealand Ballet, has been at his side throughout those years.

As a Fulbrighter, Jon travelled to the United States in 1983 where he and Jacqui were guests at the American Ballet Theatre of New York. They both found that the opportunity of working in such a large repertory company was invaluable, giving many points of comparison as well as contrast with the situation back in New Zealand. Although on a vastly different scale in terms of company membership, repertoire, audiences, personnel, funding etc., there are always issues such as standards of technique, heritage of training, maintenance of repertoire, production values, venue management, audience rapport and outreach education that are of mutual interest and relevance to ballet companies everywhere, regardless of size.

Jon recalls:  
"Outstanding memories from our time at ABT include working with Mikhail Baryshnikov who was artistic director – he was such a welcoming personality to us. Then there was Marianna Tcherkassky. These two danced together, such limpid quality in their pas de deux - she seemed to move like liquid (I’m told you can see them on YouTube dancing Les Sylphides!). Another standout performer was Cynthia Harvey. Then there was the ballet master, Jurgen Schneider.

It was very interesting for Jacqui and me to compare our previous experience with the Royal Danish Ballet, another very large company, and to then compare these with our relatively tiny company back at home. We came

home refreshed to start a new period with The New Zealand Ballet, and Harry Haythorne was appointed artistic director at about that time."

The (later Royal) New Zealand Ballet is a company of unique origins in that Poul Gnatt established a wide touring base and maintained rapport with all the supporters in all the country’s towns. In later years this proved a crucial source of support which rallied at times when the company might well have otherwise been closed down in one or another funding crisis.

This has led to the claim that the New Zealand Ballet is the longest established dance company in the southern hemisphere. It is recognised as an accomplished achiever in world ballet, and Jon Trimmer’s contribution to that status is clearly unparalleled.







## THE 2023 FULBRIGHT NZ AWARDS CEREMONY

*The annual Fulbright New Zealand Awards Ceremony is an event we always look forward to with eager anticipation. And it was a double celebration, as we congratulated over 50 Award recipients (our largest cohort ever!) and acknowledged the 75th anniversary of Fulbright in Aotearoa. We returned to Parliament this year and were delighted to be hosted there by then Deputy Speaker of the House, Greg O'Connor, with then Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Carmel Sepuloni, officiating and handing out certificates alongside His Excellency, US Ambassador Tom Udall. Our own Fulbright New Zealand Board Member and alumnus (and New Zealander of the Year!) Rangi Mātāmua was the MC, and our guest speaker was the amazing Eilish Wilson (2021 Fulbright General Graduate Award). What a night it was! The room was filled with warmth, celebration and a sense of community as we came together with the grantees, their whānau and friends, to congratulate this cohort and recognise their wonderful achievements as well as reflect on 75 years of educational exchange and friendship between New Zealand and the United States. The happy smiles say it all! Thank you to everyone who came along to celebrate with us!*



*TOP: Fulbright NZ Executive Director, Penelope Borland, addresses the audience*

*BOTTOM LEFT: Annie Te One (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Mutunga) (2023 Fulbright NZ Scholar) and her family*

*BOTTOM RIGHT: 2023 Ian Axford Fellows, Sam Mulopulos and Rachel Wolbers*



*TOP LEFT: Fulbright NZ Board member and alumnus (as well as New Zealander of the Year!) Rangi Mātāmua*

*TOP RIGHT: 2023 Fulbright Science and Innovation Graduate and General Graduate Awardees*

*BOTTOM LEFT: Then Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Carmel Sepuloni*

*BOTTOM RIGHT: Then Deputy Speaker of the House, Greg O'Connor; Ambassador Tom Udall; Eilish Wilson (2021 Fulbright General Graduate Award)*



## **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.





# 2023 FULBRIGHT NEW ZEALAND AWARD GRANTEES

*The Fulbright New Zealand award recipients who took up their awards in 2023 are:*

## **Fulbright New Zealand Science and Innovation Graduate Awards**

Jennifer Berry, Nico Hackner, Isabel Kelly, Nina Opacic, Naomi Simon-Kumar, Amy Spittal, Krystal Wright

## **Fulbright Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Graduate Award**

Yasmin Olsen (Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Tipā)

## **Fulbright New Zealand General Graduate Awards**

Emerita Baik, Bonita Bigham (Ngāruahine, Te Atiawa), Rebecca Hawkes, Tim Lawler, Te Maiora Rurehe (Tühoe/Te Arawa), Lachlan Taylor, Leah Thomas, Jimmy Toebs, Kat Werry

## **Fulbright US Graduate Awards**

Abi Bartlett, Emily Beck, Michael Bishop, Caroline Caldwell, Nick Dragone, Madison Emond, Alex Hawley (Diné, Navajo), Kevin Lujan Lee (Chamoru, Familian Capili), Sammi Maza, Will McNeil, Melanie Stowell, Mark Stukel, Lael Tate, Christina Dawa Kutsmana Thomas (Numu-Northern Paiute, Newe-Western Shoshone, Hopi), Lanea Tuiasosopo

## **Fulbright New Zealand Scholar Awards**

Siautu Alefaio-Tugia (Fagamalo, Matautu-Tai, Sāsina Ma Manunu), Gill Bonnett, Alice Chang-Richards, Siân Halcrow, Murdoch Stephens, Annie Te One (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Mutunga)

## **Fulbright Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Scholar Award**

Hinekura Smith (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi)

## **Fulbright-Creative New Zealand Pacific Writer's Residency**

Gina Cole

## **Fulbright US Scholar Awards**

Kelley Barsanti, Jackie Grant, Jessica Hardin, Hannah Johnson, Emily Levesque, Robin Prichard, Joellen Russell, Katharine Suding

## **Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching for US Teachers**

Emily Julien Musta, Andrea Ruizorvis

## **Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy**

*(These awards are administered by Fulbright New Zealand on behalf of the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships Board.*  
Sam Mulopulos, Rachel Wolbers

*TOP: Hinekura Smith (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi) (2023 Fulbright Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Scholar Award); Gina Cole (2023 Fulbright-Creative New Zealand Pacific Writer's Residency); Jackie Grant (2023 Fulbright US Scholar Award); Emily Levesque (2023 Fulbright US Scholar Award); Joellen Russell (2023 Fulbright US Scholar Award)*

*BOTTOM: Joseph Xulué (Siloam – New Caledonia, Lufi Lufi, Fagamalo – Samoa) (2022 Fulbright NZ General Graduate Award); Henry Benson-Pope (2019 Fulbright General Graduate Award); Yasmin Olsen (Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Tipā) (2023 Fulbright Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Graduate Award); Jimmy Toebs (2023 Fulbright NZ General Graduate Award)*





Alehandrea Raiha Manuel, Nicole Edwards, Nikki Barrett, Zoë Henry, Liam Wooding, Ngarangi Haerewa

## FROM THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD TO TURTLE ISLAND

Earlier this year, an awesome group of Fulbrighters from Aotearoa collaborated to present at the NAISA conference in Toronto, Canada. The Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) is an interdisciplinary, international membership-based organisation comprised of scholars working in all aspects of Native American and Indigenous Studies.

Zoë Henry (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu, Makefu - Niue), Alehandrea Raiha Manuel (Ngāti Porou), Ngarangi Haerewa (Te Whanau-ā-Apanui), Liam Wooding (Ngāti Hinearo, Ngāti Tuera/Te Ati Haunui-a-Pāpārangī), Nicole Edwards (Ngā Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu) and Nikki Barrett (Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Porou), worked as a panel to present 'From the Land of the Long White Cloud to Turtle Island: Navigating Indigeneity as Fulbright Scholars'.

Their kōrero aimed to explore and reflect on their unique positionings as Indigenous visitors/relations/cousins on Turtle Island as well as critically examine the intersection between Indigenous and Fulbright award recipients. Through this conversation, the group hoped to "share the unspoken, the felt but not seen of [their] experiences so far on Turtle Island and to extend the possibility of building an Indigenous Fulbright network in the future."



Liam Wooding presenting at the NAISA conference

We asked them to share their personal highlights from this experience:

**Zoë:** Being surrounded by Indigenous voices and knowledges at NAISA was absolutely stunning and something I had really missed being away from home. And hearing all our Māori vowels again!

**Alehandrea:** Reconnecting with each other in Indigenous spaces, listening to each other's experiences, the laughs with each other, and being in the presence of young, brilliant Indigenous leaders.

**Ngarangi:** Definitely reconnecting. Not having to explain things twice but also to be inspired by one another. Meeting some of the Rangatira from Waikato and learning our mutual whānau connection.

**Liam:** Being able to learn about some of the cutting-edge interdisciplinary research in Indigenous spaces right now. As someone who is only just dipping their toes into this space as a researcher, the conference was a real encouragement to keep exploring my research interests into the intersection between Te Ao Māori and classical music in New Zealand.

**Nicole:** NAISA was an invaluable opportunity to connect with other Indigenous communities and their Kaupapa, and to experience such strong overlaps in values, interests and aspirations amongst diverse communities.

**Nikki:** This opportunity provided me with a much-needed connection to other Māori and Indigenous Peoples. It refuelled my wairua!

The Fulbright programme is all about educational and cultural exchange, collaboration, connection and friendship – and this mahi is a great example of those values in action. Well done team for sharing your knowledge and insights on the global stage, and for initiating kōrero around your own experiences of navigating Indigeneity as Fulbrighters. These are important conversations! Ka rawe koutou katoa!

## SHARE YOUR STORY – CONTRIBUTE 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 [comms@fulbright.org.nz](mailto:comms@fulbright.org.nz)



# A PACIFIC PRESCRIPTION? STUDY TO PROBE KAVA AS TRAUMA TREATMENT

This article was written by Chris Marriner for the NZ Herald and is reprinted with permission from the author and the NZ Herald.

Apo Aporosa is a 2022 Fulbright NZ Scholar Awardee.

*It is a plant with thousands of years of use and with deep cultural roots in the Pacific.*

Now a team of New Zealand researchers are set to study kava - and its use in traditional settings - as a way to heal those living with trauma.

While the plant, the root of which is mixed in water and consumed across the Pacific, has been packaged and sold in supplements for years, its use in cultural spaces has been largely ignored by the pharmaceutical companies that sold it around the world as a relaxant and sleep aid.

Now Pacific health researcher Dr Apo Aporosa and Pacific mental health nurse lecturer Dr Sione Vaka from the University of Waikato will co-lead a study to assess the efficacy of kava when consumed alongside talanoa, the open and respectful dialogue that accompanies kava drinking in formal and informal settings.

The clinical trials will take three years, focusing on first responders, corrections staff and military personnel who have seen combat and they will be supported by a nearly \$1 million grant from the Health Research Council.

Aporosa said he was “extremely grateful” to have the research funded. “This could save people’s lives,” he told the Herald.

But the former police officer turned academic noted that the development was “bittersweet”.

“It’s likely we’re going to spend a million dollars to prove what traditional Pacific knowledge has been trying to tell Europeans for the last 200 years,” he told the Herald.

He said he relished the opportunity to prove the efficacy of faikava (the traditional sharing of kava and conversation) in treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and heal more broken people by inviting them into the kava circle.

“I’m so stoked that Health Research Council has faith in us as a team to do this critically important work because it’s not just me, it’s the entire team,” Aporosa told the Herald.

## ‘We’re not here to make money’

The WHO reports that around 10 per cent of New Zealanders will experience PTSD but our first responders, corrections officers and military personnel suffer at much higher rates.

Aporosa, a former soldier and police officer who left the force due to PTSD, has spent years exploring the role of kava and talanoa in relieving the symptoms of trauma.

That experience - speaking with military and police around the world - coupled with his own personal journey, led to Aporosa being awarded a Fulbright Scholarship last year to study the subject further in Hawai’i.

That work will help inform the clinical study.

Aporosa said one aim of the research was to produce a guide that could be used by those struggling with PTSD and other mental health issues, without the need for direct intervention from a psychologist and outside of what, he said, could be a Eurocentric framework.

“Our goal is that, following the clinical trials, you and your friend will be able to download a free book that explains how we do the intervention.”

“We’re potentially providing a form of therapy that people are going to be able to easily replicate, by simply sitting with friends and drinking a traditional substance that allows for quality conversation as it doesn’t cause euphoria or disinhibit like alcohol or cannabis.”

“I don’t imagine that the pharmaceutical industry is going to be impressed if we can show traditional kava use can reduce PTSD symptoms, particularly as kava is cheap and easy to access.”

“We’re not here to make money, we’re here to bring mental health to people, to reduce PTSD.

“You shouldn’t have to pay for that.”

Asked what faikava might look like in a New Zealand context, Aporosa said it was important that the spaces observe some of the fundamental tikanga that exists across the Pacific.

He used the custom of sitting on the floor as an example.

“Pacific peoples have always sat on the floor. That’s not because we didn’t know how to make chairs, it’s because this is important to us culturally, about being able to look across the space at each other with us all at the same level, sitting on the floor, showing respect.”

But however these gatherings operate, Aporosa said the kava itself should not be the focus.

He said focus on the substance becomes a “point of fixation”.

“It’s almost like the liquid in the bowl is the exotic other. What the onlooker fails to recognise is that the kava in the bowl plays a critical role in facilitating relational connection.”





Photo credit: Dave Duffin

**The study**

The clinical study aims to follow six groups of first responders, police and post-combat military who are living with trauma, with the majority coming from our Pacific communities.

The groups will be split between male and female and participants will be assessed by psychologists before, during and after the process.

Two groups (one male, one female) will receive what Aporosa calls the “full package” and take part in kava sessions that include talanoa.

Two other groups will engage in talanoa without the kava and the final two will take a standardised

dose of kavalactones (the active ingredients in kava) in capsule form and not engage in any talanoa.

He described the groups as an organic space, saying clinical psychologists will be there for safety and won't run the sessions.

“We do know that CBT or talk therapy works for some PTSD cases,” Aporosa said, adding that talanoa could function as talk therapy.

“We know that kava has relaxant properties, that kava is a natural anti-anxiety medication, so we combine those two elements in a culturally influenced space, and we've got something here that's unique.”

**An unmet need**

Rates of PTSD are higher in our Pacific and Māori communities and Aporosa noted that many face financial barriers to seeking treatment.

“So they're living with trauma and having to do the best that they can.

“Kava provides them with a therapy, an indigenous, culturally based therapy and medicine, all in one.”

Not having to meet what can be a high bar of entering into the potentially expensive and Eurocentric practice of psychotherapy is not the only benefit that kava offers, with Aporosa also noting a more universal advantage.

He cites avoidance as a major barrier to seeking treatment and kava can help those living with trauma who are often reluctant to relive it through therapy.

He told the Herald that he had learned from working with post-combat soldiers that the drink allowed participants to share without feeling panicky or numb.

“You still feel the emotions but those emotions are not overwhelming.

“That's one of the keys to this intervention, what makes it novel.”

He said the clinical trials will help the team understand it more but believes the experience is a “package deal” that requires the cultural values and practice and the talanoa or talk therapy.

“It's not solely the kava.”

**Women and kava**

The study's 50/50 gender split will see women as active participants in the faikava, a reality not seen in some Pacific communities.

Aporosa told the Herald that this adherence to tradition was causing women to miss out.

“We're doing some of our Pacific women a disservice by not allowing them into these spaces or prohibiting them,” he said.

“We're supposed to have values that are inclusive and welcoming, but we're actually working against us like we've recolonised our minds and bought into some of this BS that's going on.”

Anau Mesui-Henry, who will join the study as a PhD student, was raised around kava as the daughter of a Tongan kava merchant and said she was raised seeing women at the faikava only as tou'a, the woman serving the kava.

She argued that the role offered some benefits for women, sometimes allowing them to use it as a way to raise funds, but also said that women drinking kava was becoming more acceptable in Tonga, as it is in other Pacific societies.

She said the “cultural classroom” of the faikava allowed men to be open and to share and learn but women were still determining how that space will work for them.

“We're kind of establishing what that space feels, looks like for us,” she said.

Mesui-Henry recently organised a series of Kava-X sessions, events where participants share kava and stories of mental health and healing - and where Pacific traditions were at play at a deep level.

She told the Herald a lot of those traditions were currently missing from similar events put on for her community, saying many had the trappings of tradition but still observed a Western framework that had been 'browned up'.

“A lot of people will be like, ‘this is cultured’ but all I see is the food, the karakia and the brown person,” she said.

“But where are our cultural philosophies or our cultural concepts?”

Mesui-Henry said the Tongan community had been largely supportive but offered a firm response to critics of her efforts to open up the faikava.

“I grew up in this, you want me to change my story?” she told the Herald.

She said she had seen the power of the kava space to bring disparate groups together at Four Shells, the kava lounge she runs with her husband Todd Henry.

“For me it's magical,” she said of the process of people connecting over the bitter beverage.

“I've seen how people were sometimes not even realising that that's happening”.

**A fresh look at mental health**

Aporosa said he expected that the intervention would have its critics, “particularly from those who view traditional medicinal knowledge as lacking authority or being primitive”.

“But I would say to those people, look at the failure of expensive Western medicine in the treatment of PTSD.

“If we keep doing what we've always done, we're going to get what we've always got. That's the reality.

“It's time to recognise that there are some amazing potentials in indigenous knowledge and indigenous medicines.”

“We need to start thinking about our fellow humans instead of our wallet. Good mental health and relational connection should never be driven by money, it should be driven by character, integrity, the desire to see others healed, be in healthy relationships and living full lives.”



# FULBRIGHT NZ TEAM HELLOS



Kia ora and welcome to **Paul Altomari**, who joined the team earlier this year as a Programme Manager. Paul looks after the Fulbright US Graduate Awards, Fulbright Specialist Awards and the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching for NZ and US teachers. Originally from the US, he's lived in Wellington for 12 years and joins Fulbright NZ from Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington where he was Senior Adviser of Admissions and Enrolments. Paul's academic background is in the study and performance of music and when he's not at his Fulbright NZ desk, you might spot him playing double bass with the NZ Symphony Orchestra, the Auckland Philharmonia or Orchestra Wellington, where he is Section Principal.



Kia ora and welcome to **Erella Sonnino**, who joined the team in August as our new Events and Alumni Coordinator. Erella came to Aotearoa on her travels around 20 years ago and never left! She was previously Executive Assistant at the Postgraduate Students' Association at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington. Erella recently did a wonderful job of organising her first Fulbright NZ event – our 75th birthday celebration for Canterbury-based alumni.

## WANT TO JOIN US?

EMAIL [ALUMNI@FULBRIGHT.ORG.NZ](mailto:ALUMNI@FULBRIGHT.ORG.NZ)

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

We are excited to be re-starting the Good Works programme in early 2024. Fulbright Good Works is a series of monthly seminars that showcase the ongoing research and achievement of Fulbright NZ and US alumni.

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 and will be held virtually. To register your interest, please email [comms2@fulbright.org.nz](mailto:comms2@fulbright.org.nz) with a brief summary of what your presentation will be about and when you would ideally like to present. Please also include the year and title of your Fulbright award.





# KNOW A FUTURE FULBRIGHTER?

Fulbright New Zealand offers a range of 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-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Graduate Award

Fulbright US Graduate Awards

Fulbright New Zealand Scholar Awards

Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Scholar Award

Fulbright Creative New Zealand Pacific Writers Residence Award

Fulbright Specialist Awards

Fulbright US Scholar Awards

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

1 August annually

1 August annually

1 August annually

10 October annually

1 October annually

1 October annually

March annually

1 August & 1 April annually

16 September annually

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