CELEBRATING OUR DONORS’ GENEROSITY

The University of Auckland Annual Report to Donors

2021
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2021 was an extraordinary year for giving to the University of Auckland.

These gifts came from 3,188 donors, up from 2,302 in 2020.

The total number of gifts in 2021 was 5,682, up from 4,898 in 2020.

Included in the 2021 total were 3 gifts and gifts in kind of more than $10 million.

11 donors made gifts of between $1 million and $10 million.

$5,392,125 was received in support of academic chairs and fellowships.

The largest number of gifts in 2021 was to support student scholarships and projects – 3,079 in total. These gifts added up to $3,956,068 for student support.

Support for research at the university in 2021 was exceptionally generous, coming to a total of $59,647,154.

We now have 431 members in the University’s cumulative giving society, the Chancellor’s Circle*:

- 31 members in the Sir Maurice O’Rorke Society which recognises giving of more than $5 million,
- 79 members in the Sir George Fowlds Society which recognises giving between $1 million and $5 million, and
- 321 members in the Sir Douglas Robb Society which recognises giving between $100,000 and $1 million.

$4,694,335 in donor-funded scholarships were awarded 944 students.

We had 2,839 donors give through the Annual Giving Programme in 2021

Together, they gave $667,069 for research and student initiatives, through a total of 4,881 gifts.

$5,392,125 was received in support of Faculty of Science scholarships.

A scholarship in accounting and finance.

A Vocal Scholarship at the School of Music.

$4,694,335 in donor-funded scholarships were awarded 944 students.

The University of Auckland Foundations use CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) global standards for calculating total funds raised in any year. These figures include all philanthropic income received through the University of Auckland Foundation, the Medical & Health Sciences Foundation and directly to the University of Auckland.

*Due to Covid-19 restrictions in 2021, we were unable to hold the Chancellor’s Dinner, where new members are welcomed into the Chancellor’s Circle. New members will be announced and celebrated at a future date. The numbers above include those donors who wish to remain anonymous.
SUPPORTERS IN 33 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD MADE DONATIONS IN 2021.
The largest number came from New Zealand, followed by Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Canada, Malaysia and Singapore.

The number of donors supporting the University
ROSE STEADILY WITH INCREASING AGE UP TO 80:

<table>
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<th>Age</th>
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<td>21-30</td>
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<td>81+</td>
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The median gift for 2021 was $50.

Online giving was up in 2021. 2,245 donors (1,157 in 2020), gave 4,107 gifts (3,287 in 2020), contributing $571,680 ($430,000 in 2020).

39% of our 214,365 alumni engaged with us through communication, participation and giving.

As in 2020, COVID-19 restrictions affected the ways alumni engaged with the University.

Some in-person events went ahead while others were replaced by virtual events.

A University of Auckland online book club was launched.
Tēnā koutou katoa

It has been an extraordinary year for philanthropy at our University. In 2021 we saw even more donors supporting our mission than in 2020, through an even greater number of gifts.

Interestingly, funding for research programmes and positions was markedly increased, perhaps driven by heightened awareness of the crucial work that our researchers do in addressing the major issues around us – not only in response to Covid-19 but across many areas of need and opportunity.

Of particular note last year were the gifts nearing or exceeding $10 million which were received for large programmes of research. Funding on this scale enables step changes in discovery and knowledge and we thank these visionary donors for their powerful contributions. One of these noteworthy gifts was $11 million from Lynne Erceg for a precision medicine programme to transform cancer diagnosis and treatment. Another was $9,808,554 from the US-based major funding body, Flu Lab, to support an influenza and viral respiratory disease research agenda intended to reveal new information about viral transmission and behaviour.

We acknowledge and sincerely thank Trimble Inc. for their gift to establish New Zealand’s firstTrimble Technology Lab, which will provide transformative learning for students through using smart and digital technologies in engineering.

We wish to make special mention too of the donors who so generously fund ongoing programmes and positions, many of whom are named in our Chancellor’s Circle cumulative giving recognition society. These donors are ensuring longevity and stability for our research programmes and we look forward to welcoming more members to the Chancellor’s Circle in the future.

Thank you to all our donors and we wish you the very best for the year ahead.

Ngā mihi nui,

GEOFF RICKETTS CNZM
Chair, the University of Auckland Foundation

PROFESSOR DAWN FRESHWATER
Vice-Chancellor, the University of Auckland

Thank you to our 3,188 donors

Tēnā tātou katoa

Thank you to each and every one of the 3,188 donors to the University in 2021. Many of you gave to assist students experiencing financial hardship or to support scholarships in a particular area of interest to you, and others to help fund advancement of knowledge through research.

In bringing together this report, we have highlighted a sample of the many activities enabled through donor support. I hope you find these stories interesting and inspiring.

You may notice as you read through these pages the stunning examples of architecture around our City Campus, from the former Auckland Jewish Synagogue which houses the Alumni Relations and Development office to the angular Engineering building to the glassy exterior of the School of Biological Sciences. Because of Covid-19 restrictions all our photo shoots took place outside, each person individually. Much as we would love to show you inside our labs and study spaces, we are pleased this time to instead present a mini tour of our ‘learning quarter’!

Thank you again for playing an active role in the University community. As you read this report, please know that your contribution is making a significant impact – creating positive pathways for students and supporting important research and innovation.

Ngā mihi,

MARK BENTLEY
Director, Alumni Relations and Development
Transformative partnerships

The University of Auckland acknowledges with special thanks the following donors, whose contributions will have a transformative impact on its research programmes and on its ability to deliver excellence in teaching and learning:

Lynne Erceg gave

$11 MILLION

for a precision medicine programme to transform cancer diagnosis and treatment.

This extraordinary gift will revolutionise the way that healthcare is delivered to patients – moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach to take into account that every patient is different, that each has a genetically different cancer and that treatment needs to fit each individual patient. The key enabler of precision medicine healthcare is genomics. Precision medicine has been transforming healthcare for almost all medical ailments, including heart and lung diseases, hereditary conditions in newborn babies and, of course, cancer – the area in which precision medicine holds the greatest promise and which has arguably advanced the most in the past decade.

This gift will make precision medicine a reality in New Zealand, increasing knowledge about cancer treatment to improve the lives of cancer patients and their families.

Trimble Inc. gave

A MAJOR GIFT

to establish and support New Zealand’s first Trimble Technology Lab in the Faculty of Engineering.

Flu Lab gave

$9,808,554

for influenza and respiratory disease research on viral transmission and behaviour.

The aim of this outstanding contribution from the United States-based Flu Lab is to improve detection and surveillance of respiratory viruses, including influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and to develop interventions to reduce respiratory illness. Recent measures to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 created a unique opportunity for research in the New Zealand environment.

The University of Auckland recognises the exceptional generosity of the following donors, who gave

$1 MILLION OR MORE IN 2021:

- Alan Maxwell Revocable Trust
- Aotearoa Foundation
- Auckland Medical Research Foundation
- Cancer Society Auckland Northland
- Cure Kids
- Lynne Erceg
- Fletcher Building Employee Educational Fund
- Flu Lab
- Theresa Gattung
- Neurological Foundation of New Zealand
- Pasifika Futures Limited
- Rockfield Trust
- Trimble Inc.

In addition to their outstanding gifts in 2021, many of these generous donors are ongoing major supporters and are acknowledged through our cumulative giving society, The Chancellor’s Circle. Please see page 28.

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Around one in every 500 babies in New Zealand is born with asphyxiation and stroke and suffers some degree of brain damage.

Unfortunately the signs of damage, which are usually grouped under the heading “Cerebral Palsy”, are not always visible from birth and not identified or diagnosed until the infant is much older.

This means an important opportunity to intervene with tools and strategies that could greatly reduce the burden of the disability, is missed.

Now groundbreaking research funded by the Friedlander Foundation at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI) is set to change this.

The Foundation has given $2.95 million for a five-year project focused on developing tools for early detection and treatment of neurological disorders in infants. Professor Thor Besier, who runs ABI’s musculoskeletal modelling group and his co-investigator, Dr Angus McMorland from the University’s Department of Exercise Sciences, are leading a team of 16 researchers.

“Creating tools to assess and treat children with neurological disorders will have an enormous impact on the lives of those affected,” says Thor. “It also has the potential to reduce the associated costs of healthcare and give equality to all New Zealand babies.”

Currently as many as 50 percent of children who develop movement disorders are not identified or diagnosed until the infant is much older.

Now that Maia is 18, CT and MRI scans show she has a normal functioning brain from the stem-cell transplant. But she still has movement issues – teenagers grow, they lose balance and it’s much harder for Maia to regain that control of movement.

In the second part of Angus’s work, his team is feeding meticulously labelled videos and clinical assessment data into very large computer-learning systems, which will then create complex algorithms for assessing movement.

“Creating tools to assess and treat children with neurological disorders will have an enormous impact on the lives of those affected,” says Thor. “It also has the potential to reduce the associated costs of healthcare and give equality to all New Zealand babies.” – PROFESSOR THOR BESIER
time the phases of musculoskeletal development have been impacted.

“We hope with our work, there will be subtle movement indications to identify these non-obvious cases.”

From these, web-based software will be designed for clinicians so they can quickly develop a personalised assessment of a child’s movements.

One of the challenges of children with neurological disorders is the unusual deformation of bones. Even though signals sent from the child’s brain to its limbs can be retrained, most children still need additional help to move.

With the Friedlander funding, ABI has purchased a state-of-the-art, Alter-G gait-retraining treadmill that uses an inflatable “bladder” to push the user off the ground so they experience less body weight when walking or running on the treadmill. Clinical trials, which Maia Friedlander will be a part of, have been designed to assess the benefits of this. Maia has already been in and met the team scheduled to start the trials in 2022.

Thor Besier’s musculoskeletal modelling group are also developing low-cost wearable sensors that can be sent to different parts of New Zealand to provide remote movement assessment and monitoring for individual children.

“If we can create models specific to each child and their biomechanics then this work will be game-changing for paediatrics,” says Thor.

For Jillian Friedlander the opportunity for a personalised medicine model “is a paradigm shift for the future. The current one-size-fits-all approach to rehabilitation clearly does not lead to optimal outcomes.”

The Friedlander-funded research is one of many groundbreaking projects underway at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute, which turned 20 in 2021. World-renowned for its mathematical modelling of various organ systems, the Institute attracts significant support from government and private donors such as Ataheke Foundation, which is also funding part of Julie’s Choisne’s research and her salary.

The impact of donor support is huge and for Thor Besier, The Friedlander Foundation’s support in other ways, such as connecting researchers to Whānau Āwhina Plunket (NZ Plunket), has created the ideal partnership.

“We hope we can give back,” he says, “and change the lives of hundreds of young New Zealand children, and thousands worldwide, who suffer from a movement disorder.”

Shweta Rajput

“This is the biggest thing that’s happened to me so far,” Shweta Rajput is talking via Zoom from Delhi. “It was a big deal to get the scholarship. My father’s retired and my brother is pursuing an MBA. So, we both are studying. This scholarship definitely reduced the financial burden on my parents. Now,” she says laughing, “I’m the best kid in the family!”

Shweta is one of two international University of Auckland postgraduate students awarded a Hinrich Global Trade Leader Scholarship in October 2021. The Foundation awarded the second scholarship to Xiaohang Zhou (Skyler), and the pair are now part of a select group of nine scholars attending other world-class universities in Singapore, Hong Kong, London, Washington, DC, and France.

The generous NZ$30,000 scholarships are gifts from the Hinrich Foundation, with matched funding from the Li Ka-Shing Foundation. The focus of the Hinrich Scholarships is to develop leaders who will advance sustainable global trade, the driving philosophy of Merle A. Hinrich, chairman and founder of the Hinrich Foundation.

“Central to trade sustainability is the triple bottom line – people, planet and profit. It must be mutually beneficial,” Hinrich says. “A positive engagement between buyer and seller, people and nations.”
The concept of sustainable trade was not something Skyler or Shweta were familiar with when they began the 18-month Master of International Business degree (MIntBus), designed for talented young professionals. Shweta had graduated in 2015 with a bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering from Noida International University in India and worked in the renewable energy sector for companies across her home country. She started as a technical engineer before beginning the move to more managerial roles.

It was nine years since Skyler graduated with a bachelor’s degree in International Economics and Trade from Hohai University in China. When she finally began the degree programme, she was among the international students forced to study remotely.

Becoming Hinrich Scholars gave them opportunities above and beyond their graduate studies. The Hinrich Scholarship offers a portal to a wide range of activities and mentorship opportunities in addition to the financial support for their course. Through the Hinrich Foundation, they become part of a growing global network of next-generation trade leaders who they can connect with and learn from through the Hinrich Foundation Alumni Association.

Covid-19 helped her arrive at that conclusion. In March 2020, she had just arrived in the country at the end of a long business trip when international borders closed abruptly, preventing her return home to Shanghai. Even as she continued to manage business remotely, the break from the frantic pace of life back in China gave her time to think and the realisation she had the perfect opportunity to return to study. Meanwhile, Shweta had just been accepted for the MIntBus degree course. Now the pandemic had shut her out of New Zealand and delayed the start of her study. When she finally began the degree programme, she was among the international students forced to study remotely.

Shweta says that having concentrated largely on technical roles, she can now think beyond those boundaries. “That was a big change in me. I’m learning so much and that is giving me a different perspective. It’s true that the choices we make in global trade today will shape our world for years to come.”

Jenny Jefferson, Professional Programme Manager of the Business School’s Graduate School of Management says that global perspective is very important when they are with a cohort of people from prestigious universities around the world. “As a scholarship, it’s unparalleled in making connections. It’s not only what they hope to get from the scholarship, but what they bring to the scholarship community,” she says. “I think that’s a key part of the scholarship being successful – they want them to be collaborative. And the scholarship’s alumni then contribute to following cohorts.

“For the University, it is incredible to be able to offer students such a valuable opportunity. We’re so appreciative of our relationship with the Hinrich Foundation and very proud of Skyler and Shweta in their scholarship achievement.”

The Hinrich Foundation Global Trade Leader Scholarship programme, established 20 years ago. For him the scholarship is deeply personal, and the reason he makes a point of meeting every new group of scholars.

The programme is open to international students studying full-time for a Master of International Business, who have a strong interest in working in global trade, are motivated to work in Asia, have proven financial need, and agree to become a Hinrich Foundation mentor upon graduating. All Global Trade Leader Scholarship recipients are invited to become lifelong members of the Hinrich Foundation Alumni Association.

“Everything is interlinked in terms of study, reading and lectures,” says Shweta, whose philosophy in life is to “learn by constantly broadening my horizons”. Because the scholarship is offered to students in an extremely broad spectrum of trade-related areas, they have the chance to hear from leading experts in fields they often know little or nothing about, and to interact with them. Shweta and Skyler have found the scholarship experience exhilarating. It is changing how they imagine their futures.

“Everything is included in the sustainability concept,” says Skyler, “and this scholarship is developing my thinking. I intend to take that concept across everything I do. And maybe start my own company.”

Shweta says that, with the Hough Foundation Alumni Association, they are committed to lifelong service.

In addition, he has consistently supported education by building libraries and information centres, and through the Hinrich Global Trade Leader Scholarship programme, established 20 years ago. For him the scholarship is deeply personal, and the reason he makes a point of meeting every new group of scholars.

As a young man Merle did well at college but, when encouraged to go on to university, knew his family couldn’t afford it. It was a scholarship that enabled him to earn a graduate degree in International Trade at the Thunderbird School of Global Management. Established post-World War II, the school’s core philosophy was that countries that trade together are less likely to go to war with each other.

“Global trade is the single most important driver of development,” he says, having witnessed it firsthand over five decades working across Asia. “It has a positive impact on economic growth, living standards and, ultimately, contributes to alleviating poverty.”

Merle sums up his commitment to the Scholarship programme, and its 300-plus beneficiaries, quite simply – “Without the generosity of strangers, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

At an age when many people are well into retirement, Merle continues to work to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Hinrich Foundation, the Scholarship programme, and the growing network of alumni who carry the philosophy of sustainable trade across global markets.
“We design the labs with a consistent look and feel,” says Trimble Inc. Director for Education & Outreach Allyson McDuffie. “These are a global family of tech labs, and that extends into wanting that feeling of community between the faculty and students within each of the universities.”

As a world leader in digital technologies for engineering, construction, agriculture, architecture, planning, digital design, geospatial surveying and mapping, Trimble will provide the Auckland lab with cutting-edge software and hardware that will create significant new research activities – and transform the way courses are taught and delivered.

Included in the gift are the Trimble XR10 HoloLens 2 hard hat, the Trimble Connect open collaboration tool, the Trimble SX10 which combines surveying, imaging and high-speed 3D scanning in one instrument, together with many software packages which Vicente says will “enable students to do things that you couldn’t do in the past with more traditional approaches”.

Having the ability to visualise complex physical phenomena in water, like the mock-up of a dam, augmented reality can be run through the tablets or mobiles of students and help to revolutionise the learning experience.

“These are a global family of tech labs, and that extends into wanting that feeling of community between the faculty and students within each of the universities.”

“That provides a lot of flexibility for academics to run experiments and demonstrations without moving a huge cohort of students to a lab where you have limited space, and you can run these experiments and these demonstrations anywhere and anytime,” says Vicente.

Trimble’s Tekla building information modelling software and its SketchUp 3D design software are also part of the package, and Allyson says the gift is about bridging a gap that exists between industry and academia where universities sometimes don’t have the latest and greatest technology.

“This is why I think universities find it so incredibly valuable to work with us because we have such a broad portfolio of solutions that are used heavily in industry – and students graduating from university programs really need to be up on it.”

And because the engineering and construction industries are moving to digitalisation and greater use of smart technologies, Vicente says the opportunity to use Trimble technology can only enhance graduate employment prospects. “We need to prepare students to be ready to use digital technologies whatever the brand is. So I think the prospect of improving the employability of students is significant.”

The opportunities created by the TTL will also reach beyond engineering to benefit thousands of students in other disciplines like architecture, computer science and even anthropology where Vicente says the Trimble software could be used to scan ruins and create a 3D model of ancient construction methods.

“They can have access to different hardware and software that will enable them to undertake their research at no cost because the technology will be accessible to the whole university.”

Another feature of the gift is the provision of in-person and online training resources from Trimble, and Allyson is looking to expand a Visiting Professionals Program that sponsors industry participants to spend a day on campus talking about their professional lives to help inspire students.

Involving students in ‘capstone’ projects that require the end-to-end solving of real-world problems under the guidance of industry players is another option. “It’s just a really fantastic
opportunity that we can develop here in terms of that engagement with industry under the umbrella of smarter and digital technologies,” says Vicente.

“We’re getting this massive donation because they believe in what we do, so this is going to really showcase the capabilities of the University of Auckland and how we engage with industry.”

The gift agreement with Trimble is for an initial five years with the option of a five-year extension, which will also allow time for a deeper engagement in terms of knowledge exchanges, internships and partnerships with other TTLs worldwide.

To that end, Allyson is in the process of planning the inaugural Trimble Technology Lab conference at Scotland’s Edinburgh Napier University in mid-2022 which she says will create the perfect networking opportunity. “I know that Vincente in his area of civil construction is going to be very interested in talking to some of our folks at the University of São Paulo in Brazil or Virginia Tech here in the US.”

Founded in 1978, Trimble Inc. employs more than 11,500 people in 40 countries including New Zealand where it has offices in Auckland and Christchurch. With a market value of around US$20 billion, Vicente says that attracting sponsorship from such a high-profile Nasdaq-listed company demonstrates Auckland’s capability to engage with industry.

“We’re getting this massive donation because they believe in what we do, so this is going to really showcase the capabilities of the University of Auckland and how we engage with industry. And I think from that sole perspective this is super powerful.”

And as Auckland’s TTL Faculty Champion, Vicente aims to develop a “coherent vision” across the entire campus. “I’m still a humble academic,” he says, but “this represents a milestone in my academic career because it is going to benefit the whole University.”

Hannah Talbot, a final-year Bachelor of Laws student, is one of 135 young females interested in talking to some of our folks at the University of São Paulo in Brazil or Virginia Tech here in the US.”

Demonstrating to the students the wide range of roles and industries that people with law degrees work in beyond law firms is a key objective of the programme.

She says having a mentor has helped to demystify the elusive veil between law school and law firms. “I’ve gained valuable insight into what life really looks like as a lawyer and what personal qualities can make a great lawyer – two things you don’t learn at law school,” she says.

The University of Auckland Law School became the first in New Zealand to offer a Women’s Mentoring Programme when it was introduced in 2019. It is designed to help the next generation of female legal professionals make a confident and informed transition to the workforce.

Mentors are successful women with five or more years’ experience. While they all have law degrees, they are not all practising as lawyers.

Hannah Talbot, a final-year Bachelor of Laws student, is one of 135 young females to benefit from a Women’s Mentoring Programme introduced to the Law School two years ago.

The programme is modelled on a similar initiative introduced to the Business School a decade ago by the University’s Chancellor Cecilia Tarrant (BA/LLB ‘84), when she joined the faculty as an executive-in-residence.
Cecilia is well known for helping female students succeed professionally and has been instrumental in establishing both schemes, donating both her time and financial support to the initiatives. “It’s a tremendous programme and I’m thrilled to see law students benefiting from mentoring opportunities alongside Business School students,” Cecilia says.

“So many mentors who have signed up to the programme have said to me, ‘Gosh! I wish I had had this opportunity when I was at university.’”

Both schemes aim to help address a persistent lack of women at senior levels in the business and legal professions.

Law School undergraduates are overwhelmingly female (64 percent) yet women make up less than 31 percent of partners or directors in New Zealand law firms.

“The programme ensures that when women leave this University they have some of those skills that can take years to acquire without mentorship,” Cecilia explains.

“From a curriculum point of view, it is equipping students for the future of work and giving them additional skills to deal with the challenges they might face in the workplace.”

Cecilia is the University’s first female Chancellor. She has had a successful and high profile international career as a lawyer and investment banker, and was previously a managing director of Morgan Stanley in London.

During her career she didn’t feel hindered by her gender until she reached executive-level roles, where the imbalance of females became more pronounced.

“It was probably more of a shock when I hit the glass ceiling – I hit it so hard I reverberated right off,” Cecilia says.

She advocates mentoring as an important tool to grow confidence and establish professional networks, for both men and women, and says it is beneficial for students to seek out both male and female mentors.

Aspiring criminal lawyer Jayne Iwunze was thrilled to be accepted on to the programme and matched with her “down-to-earth” mentor Anna Devathasan, a prosecutor with Kayes Fletcher Walker.

“Doing things in isolation is nowhere near as fruitful as it would be if it was done with the help, input, encouragement and advice of others,” Jayne says.

“We literally discuss anything, from work and study to my extracurricular activities. We talk about practising criminal law alongside some of the challenges that come with it, as well as the benefits of exploring both sides of the field – defence and prosecution,” Jayne says.

As well as one-on-one meetings between the mentee and mentor, a number of events and workshops are held for students throughout the year.

“I also got a lot out of the networking workshops combined with the business school mentees, as this allowed for a safe space and opportunity to put into practice what we had learned and just give it a shot.”

Jayne volunteers at the Citizens Advice Bureau and at the Auckland Community Law Centre, teaches online classes in her native tongue Igbo, and ranks in the top five female triple jumpers in New Zealand, while Hannah volunteers with Equal Justice Project, a student-led charity that uses law students’ knowledge and experience to promote access to the law.

While both students maintain demanding schedules, Hannah shared one of her valuable learnings from Fiona, regarding managing your mental health in a high-stress role.

“She said you need to have something that you zealously guard. For her, that is sleep, and it’s a non-negotiable. For me I love reading and journaling, and I don’t let anything get in the way of it. It’s a small tip, but it’s made me a better person and in turn a better law student, and, hopefully, a great lawyer.”
The heart and soul of brain research

“I love my job. I really do,” says Dr Emma Scotter, Head of the Motor Neuron Disease Laboratory in the Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland.

This is for reasons we can all relate to. It gives meaning to her life and offers a gleam of hope to those she is working with her whole heart to help.

However, she admits to another powerful force that has often kept her up late into the night. This is the intellectual challenge posed by a disease with a highly complex chain of causes, which requires input from multiple sources to advance the understanding that is urgently needed.

These include scientists and clinicians from our University and from around the world, people living with Motor Neuron Disease (MND), who form an essential part of the research team; staff and volunteers from the Motor Neuron Disease Association of New Zealand (MND NZ), which is both a sponsor and close collaborator; and generous donors vital for sustaining the scope and quality of the work.

Motor Neuron Disease, as the name implies, attacks the cells in the brain which govern movement. For the 90 to 95 percent of sufferers who have no prior warning, it announces its arrival in small but insistent ways, perhaps in the form of an unexpected weakness or a fumble with a button.

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For those who research the disease, says Emma, “it catches you by the heart.”

For the people who develop the disease and for most it comes with no prior knowledge of family history or genetic predisposition.

Family histories are richly informative, for example in allowing genetic comparisons between those who develop MND and those who do not. The genetic knowledge emerging from this study is allowing some of these invaluable links to be drawn between New Zealanders who were unaware of any family history and their distant relatives living elsewhere, for example in Australia or the UK. These are allowing the documentation of “super-families”, with the possibility of tracing the disease to a common ancestor.

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Though there is no cure yet for MND, promising treatments are now being trialled which are immensely exciting, says Emma. At least one has been shown to halt the progression of the disease in some individuals.

It has also laid the base for a large current study, led by Emma and Associate Professor Richard Rodrigue, on the genetics of MND in New Zealand – made possible by generous philanthropic support from Marcus Gerbich and Dr Amelia Pais-Rodrigues, MND NZ, Freemasons NZ, and others.

The team is seeking to learn if the high rates of disease are because of high numbers of people with particular genetic mutations – or because of other factors.

Different research methods are providing blocks of knowledge that can then reinforce and amplify one another.

One is to take a punch biopsy from the arms of patients. Since (almost) every cell in the body contains the same DNA, this provides a microcosm of what is happening in the brain: a way of getting in there and examining changes during the progress of the disease. It also allows cultivation of new live cells, enabling study of the biological impacts of genetic errors using living tissue.

Also vital are the brains bequeathed to the Neurological Foundation Human Brain Bank by people who have died from MND, leaving behind this priceless gift to benefit their families – and others – even down through the generations. In the case of one person involved, says Emma, “We were able to learn from his brain how to interpret the blood sample he gave us during his life. Now we are working with his family to achieve the best outcomes for them.”

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The Chancellor’s Circle

The Chancellor’s Circle recognises generous philanthropists who, over the years, have made important contributions to the University of Auckland. Partnerships with these generous supporters have provided opportunities for this country’s most talented young people to gain a world-class education, whatever their financial circumstances, and for our researchers to create knowledge that will transform our futures.

Special recognition for over $50m
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The Sir Maurice O’Rorke Society
Members of this society have made total contributions to the University of more than $5 million.

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Members have made total contributions of between $1 million and $5 million.

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This society recognises donors who have given a total of between $100,000 and $1 million to the University of Auckland.

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The University of Auckland
Thank you to our 2021 donors

"In terms of my motivation, the scholarship really lit a bit of fire and it was a big boost to my confidence, so that was fantastic."

- Arts student

"The funding has been pivotal in establishing glioblastoma/brain tumour research in the Centre for Brain Research."

- Brain researcher

"The scholarship gave me time to find my feet in the big city and way of life... it's given me this great foundation to start on and it's made me realise that I can do it."

- Architecture student
“There aren’t enough words to express how grateful and appreciative I am and how much this support has impacted my life in such a positive way.”

— Student

“We wouldn’t have been able to do really important work for children around the country and the world without philanthropic support.”

— Researcher

“The scholarship allows me to focus on my studies and my learning and reduces some of the stress surrounding the financial aspect of being a student.”

— Student
“This philanthropic funding is crucial to support key researchers to conduct the necessary laboratory work that is crucial for delivering transformative environmental solutions to tackle kauri dieback.”

— Chemical Science researcher

“We have been pleased and relieved to have hardship funding to provide students in need of support for everyday essentials such as rent, food, power and transport.”

— Campus Care manager
The scholarship means I can focus on my studies without the financial stresses and burden of trying to live a decent quality of life. I am so grateful for this support and I’m even more motivated to do well.

— Medical and Health Sciences student
Annual Report to Donors 2021

Thank you to our board volunteers

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Endowment Investment Pool ('EIP') Report

Acknowledging that returns from capital markets can be volatile and variable, especially in the short term, the EIP had an exceptional year in 2021 with a total return of 14.1% p.a. More importantly, the compound returns over the last ten years are 10.7% p.a. which is 1.9% p.a. above a benchmark of relevant indices weighted to match the EIP's asset allocation targets – a very satisfactory performance.

The EIP ...

**HAD A CLOSING BALANCE OF $293 million**

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<th>THE ONE-YEAR RETURN WAS</th>
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<td>14.1% p.a.</td>
<td>10.9% p.a.</td>
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The EIP was invested as follows:

- **NZ Property**: 7.7%
- **Private Equity**: 14%
- **Emerging Markets Equity**: 7%
- **Global Equity**: 40%
- **Private Credit**: 0.5%
- **NZ Fixed Interest**: 10%
- **NZ Bank Term Deposits**: 5%
- **Infrastructure**: 1%
- **Global Fixed Interest**: 4%

These returns are calculated at the pool level (by Cambridge Associates) using the industry-standard, modified Dietz method. This method calculates total pool returns on a monthly basis. Each underlying investment is valued individually and a monthly weighted average return is calculated. Monthly pool returns are then calculated over a time-weighted basis.

The EIP is managed economically by the Foundation. It charges no fees for the internal management of the bank term deposits. The total fees charged by external managers amount to no more than 0.75 percent per annum of the EIP's average monthly balance. The EIP represents the bulk of the Group's equity; the balance is made up of its current use and specified investment pools and operating accounts.

In 2021, the University of Auckland Foundation and Medical Health Sciences Foundation (together, the “Group”) received $27.8 million in gifts, earned $37.0 million on their investments and made distributions of $31.9 million.

![Financial Statements](image-url)

The figures contained in these consolidated financial statements do not include philanthropic income received directly by the University of Auckland and only reflect cash received in that financial year. These summary financial statements have been extracted from the Group’s 2021 audited financial statements but are themselves unaudited. They are provided to give interested persons a succinct overview of the Group’s financial performance. The full and audited financial statements (which give a more complete understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Group) are available online at [www.uoafoundation.org.nz](http://www.uoafoundation.org.nz) or may be requested in writing from Paul Cunningham, Foundations General Manager, Alumni Relations and Development, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 90019, Auckland 1140.