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New Zealand  
National Commission

Te Kōmihana Matua o Aotearoa mō UNESCO

NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL  
COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2024







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# He kōrero nā te Heamana | Message from the Chair

Globally and domestically, 2024 has been a year of turbulence, often as a result of clashing belief systems, frequently fuelled by mis- and dis-information. It is a world that needs organisations like UNESCO more than ever.



UNESCO contributes to peace and security by promoting international cooperation in education, sciences, culture, communication and information. UNESCO promotes knowledge sharing and the free flow of ideas to accelerate mutual understanding and a better knowledge of each other's lives.

At the National Commission, we support this work by bringing the best of UNESCO (resources, research, programmes and connections) into Aotearoa New Zealand and sharing Aotearoa's unique knowledge and expertise with UNESCO.

In 2024, UNESCO has published some key documents to help the world navigate through many of the challenging issues thrown at us, be it climate change, advancing technologies (for example, the rise of artificial intelligence), societal conflicts, or lasting issues resulting from the pandemic.

UNESCO's publications are an important means of preserving, advancing and sharing knowledge, between and across all parts of the world. While some aim to inform the general public, many provide specialists with expert knowledge drawn from UNESCO's fields of competence. UNESCO's diverse publications all serve the common goal of bringing about positive change.

Among key documents released this year are two Global Education Monitoring Reports – 2024/5 GEM Report – Leadership in Education and the 2024 Pacific Report – Technology in Education.

The later draws on primary and secondary data and expert analysis conducted by researchers, research institutes and implementing organisations working in and on the Pacific, including New Zealand data and analysis. The report, along with older GEM reports, can be found on the National Commission's knowledge hub: <https://unesco.org.nz/knowledge-hub>

UNESCO has also released two frameworks in 2024 which are critical to navigating some of the key issues we are facing.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming our world and changing the way we live, work and learn. To help education systems keep pace, in September, UNESCO launched two new AI competency frameworks – one for students and one for teachers.

These frameworks aim to guide countries in supporting students and teachers to understand the potential risks of AI in order to engage with



it in a safe, ethical, and responsible manner in education and beyond.

The new UNESCO Framework for Culture and Art Education was launched early in 2024, stressing the need for lifelong learning in culture and art within all types of educational settings, and for placing culture and the arts at the heart of education policies, strategies, curricula, and programmes.

Highlighting reports and frameworks like these is an important part of the National Commissions mahi.

Another really important part of our work is realising our mission through our five priority areas – Oceans for the Wellbeing of People and the Planet; Free Flow of Information; Indigenous Knowledge and Language; Resilient, Regenerative and Sustainable Communities, and our UNESCO programmes. This report captures some of the ways we have supported our mission and our priority areas in 2024.

The past few years have been incredibly busy for the National Commission, and 2024 was no exception, as you will see as you flick through the pages of this Annual Review.

One major highlight from this year is our participation in the UN Ocean Decade Conference, which took place in Barcelona in April. Our New Zealand delegation (which included two of our Commissioners) had the honour of addressing delegates in the opening plenary of the Conference and provided the audience with a uniquely

New Zealand experience, showcasing our work in an incredibly impactful way. On the flipside, our delegation was also able to bring back to Aotearoa new learnings and considerations to help further Aotearoa's work in this space.

Our UNESCO programmes (Creative Cities, Global Geoparks, Memory of the World, and UNESCO Chairs) also continue to enhance their international connections and presence through a variety of forums and initiatives. Waitaki Whitestone Geopark hosted international counterparts, and representatives of our Creative Cities attended a global meeting of the network, which opened many doors to new experiences and connections. Our UNESCO Chairs continue to be internationally recognised for the global initiatives they lead and partake in.

This year has seen a number of changes to our team. We farewelled two of our Commissioners after six years of inspirational mahi, and welcomed onboard two new Commissioners, who will add to the wealth of experience and outstanding skills in our team as we move forward to tackle the challenges that 2025 will bring.

I am once again incredibly proud and inspired by the work undertaken by the National Commission in 2024. I look forward to continuing and expanding on this work in 2025

**LIZ LONGWORTH**



## **Te Pae Tawhiti | Vision**

Toitū te māramatanga,

Toitū te ora,

Toitū te whenua

Our vision speaks to the notion of a connected world underpinned with knowledges, our responsibility for kaitiakitanga and ensuring a sustainable future, and the enduring permanence of our land.

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## **Te Pae Tata | Mission**

Kia renarena te taura here i Ngāi Aotearoa me ngā whānau o UNESCO huri i te ao, mā te tiri whakaaro me te waihanga raukaha, e toitū ai, e ora ai, e taurikura ai tō tātou anamata haere ake nei.

Deepening connections between the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and UNESCO globally through the sharing of ideas and building capability for a sustainable, healthy and more peaceful future.

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## **Te Mana Whakahaere | Mandate**

The National Commission ensures the permanent presence of UNESCO in New Zealand. As a country founded on the Treaty of Waitangi and as a foundation member of UNESCO the Commission represents and promotes New Zealand's interests while contributing to the development of UNESCO strategic priorities and programmes. The National Commission contributes to the building of peace, equitable and sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue, paying particular attention to the needs and interests of the Pacific region.



# Ngā Tino Tutukinga 2024 Highlights



# UN Ocean Decade Conference

In April, New Zealand took centre stage at the inaugural UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona. The delegation included our Natural Sciences and Culture Commissioners.

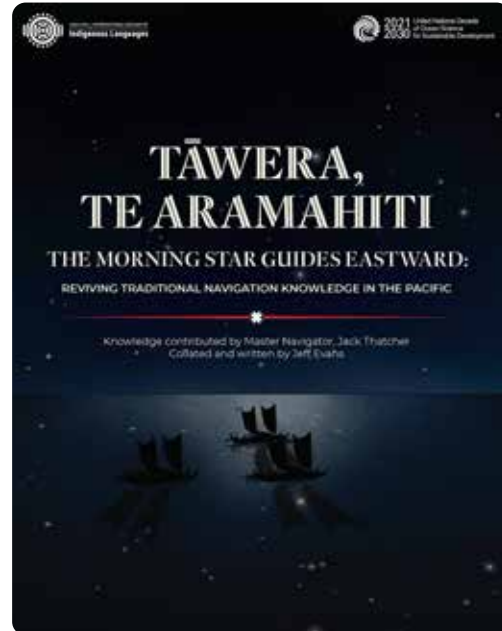
At the Conference, we shared New Zealand's unique approach to the Decade of Ocean Science during the opening plenary of the Conference and in panel events throughout. We also learned more about global commitments to the Decade and contributed to the Decade priorities moving forward. Learn more on page 22.



## Tāwera, Te Aramahiti – connecting indigenous knowledge and ocean science

The New Zealand delegation officially launched *Tāwera, Te Aramahiti | The morning star guides eastward: reviving traditional navigation knowledge in the Pacific*, a paper that captures the important role of Indigenous and local knowledge in ocean science, at the UN Ocean Decade Conference.

The beautifully written and presented paper has been incredibly popular both locally and globally. Learn more on page 25.



## Memory of the World – four new inscriptions added in 2024

Four new inscriptions were added to the Aotearoa New Zealand Memory of the World register in 2024. The latest additions were: Janet Frame’s personal and literary papers; documentary series Tangata Whenua: The People of the Land; the Frank Sargeson Collection; and the William James Harding Collection of Whanganui-Rangitikei photographs and negatives. The new inscriptions were announced at a special event in Dunedin on Janet Frame’s 100 birthday. Learn more on page 38.



## Leading Pacific Regional Consultation

In May, our Secretary General chaired the 10th Pacific regional consultation of National Commissions, leading Secretaries General from 17 Pacific Region countries in discussions on the issues affecting the region, key global, regional and sub-regional trends and associated opportunities and risks. Discussions also focused on which recommendations for specific programmatic areas and implementation approaches within the UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 should be prioritised in UNESCO’s future programme. Learn more on page 55.



# Farewelling Education and Social Sciences Commissioners and welcoming our new Commissioners

2024 saw us farewell two of our Commissioners as their terms came to an end. Our Education Commissioner Professor Carol Mutch and Social Sciences Commissioner Emeritus Professor Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop have given six years of incredible wisdom and inspirational leadership to the National Commission, working across a variety of initiatives and projects. All of which have enriched not only the mahi of the National Commission but Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole. We also warmly welcomed new Commissioners Laura Black (Social Sciences) and Professor Gail Gillon (Education), whose passion and expertise will continue to guide our mission in these important areas. Read more farewell tributes on page 57.



## Sharing knowledge

Our website, through our knowledge hub, has continued to be a popular source of information in 2024, providing viewers with a wealth of UNESCO reports, as well as information on New Zealand projects, initiatives, and reports that connect to our priority areas and UNESCO's mandate.

Visit [www.unesco.org.nz](http://www.unesco.org.nz) to see our latest updates.





# Our Priorities

Our work deepens connections between the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and UNESCO globally through the sharing of ideas and building capability for a sustainable, healthy and more peaceful future through targeting five areas, or pou.

Our priorities include the four following thematic areas, as well as our UNESCO designations and programmes (see page 26)

# Ngā Mātauranga me ngā Reo Taketake | Indigenous Knowledge and Language

Our work in this area is underpinned by an understanding that indigenous knowledges, languages and practices are a taonga and should be valued. We recognise the importance of mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori for Aotearoa New Zealand and its links through shared whakapapa and language to the people of the Pacific.



## Bringing together Pacific Media and Communications specialists at the International Association for Media and Communication Research Conference

In July, our Social Sciences Commissioner, Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, chaired a panel discussion which explored alternative ways of theorising and thinking about the contemporary media and communications environment.

The panel discussion, sponsored by the National Commission, comprised an international line-up of Pacific media and communications researchers and practitioners. The panel included Lotus Rana, a Master of Research candidate in the Department of Critical Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University; Ariela Zibiah, a former journalist and strategic communications and media practitioner; and Angie Enoka, Manager of the Māori and

Pacific Communications Team at the Ministry of Education.

The event took place at Fale Eke – Pacific Hub, in Christchurch. Discussions covered patterns of media representation and their potential impacts, how news and information can be filtered and presented through Pacific worldviews, and what Pacific advocacy might look like in media and communication practice and research.

The event was timed to coincide with the IAMCR 2024 conference *Whiria te tāngata / Weaving people together: Communicative projects of decolonising, engaging, and listening*.



## Tāwera, Te Aramahiti, The morning star guides eastward: reviving traditional navigation knowledge in the Pacific



Launched to a global audience at the UN Ocean Decade Conference, this paper captures the important role of Indigenous and local knowledge in Ocean Science.

Drawing on the knowledge of Master Navigator Jack Thatcher, and collated and written by Jeff Evans, the beautifully illustrated paper highlights the contribution of indigenous knowledges to

ocean science, focusing on navigation from a Māori knowledge perspective.

The paper prioritises and centres the voices and vast knowledge of those who know and understand voyaging waka best – the navigators.

In the foreword, Lidia Brito, Assistant Director General for the Natural Sciences at UNESCO, describes the paper as “an exceptional piece of work which brings to our attention the great reawakening in the Pacific of ocean knowledge, wayfinding, star charts and the heritage of long-distance navigation without instruments”.

The paper was commissioned by the National Commission, in conjunction with the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) section within UNESCO’s Natural Sciences Sector.

It can be downloaded from our Knowledge Hub: <https://unesco.org.nz/knowledge-hub/reviving-traditional-navigation-knowledge-in-the-pacific>

## Engagement of Indigenous People in the Ocean Decade

The National Commission contributed to a UNESCO LINKS and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Committee (IOC) guide for the engagement of indigenous and local knowledge holders within the UN Decade of Ocean Science. The guide’s purpose is to facilitate participation in the Decade by indigenous and local knowledge holders, by providing clear, accessible information on the Ocean Decade, its purpose and design. The guide highlights not only the relevance of the Decade but also the benefits of getting involved, aiming to stimulate interest and engagement in putting indigenous and local knowledge at the forefront of Decade activities. The guide includes a case study from Aotearoa New Zealand.



# Aotearoa New Zealand – how would an IDIL Decade National Action Plan fit?

In 2024, the National Commission Secretariat was joined by Imogen Tully, from Victoria University of Wellington’s internship course. As part of her internship Imogen conducted, with the support of the Secretariat, a research project into the possibility of creating an International Decade of Indigenous Languages National Action Plan for New Zealand

The project was an initial investigation of how a National Action Plan would fit with New Zealand’s current efforts in language revitalisation and what the benefits and risks of developing such a plan might be. It included a literature review, environmental scan, and critical analysis.

## Mātauranga rere noa | Free Flow of Information

**This priority area recognises the importance of free flow of ideas by word and image that contributes to peace, sustainability, poverty eradication and human rights. It is driven by a vision of enhancing an appreciation of diversity and an increased understanding of human rights to support a more inclusive society for all.**

## Supporting Race Unity Speech Awards and Hui



We were delighted to once again support the Race Unity Aotearoa Speech Awards and Hui, which took place at MIT Ōtara’s Ngā Kete Wānanga Marae, in Auckland in May.

We were represented at the event by our Communications and Information Commissioner Vanisa Dhiru and UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader Isaac Morunga. Isaac was also honoured to judge the semi-finals of the Speech Awards.

The Speech Awards are a platform for senior high school students to express how we can improve race relations in Aotearoa, and the hui provides a space where young people are able to advance the conversation about this important theme.

“I was pleased to be able to attend and support the semi-finals and national finals of the Race Unity Speech Awards. The calibre of the finalists each year is incredible – we were so blessed to have rangatahi sharing their views and personal stories on racism with power and energy again this year,” said Vanisa.

The Race Unity Speech Awards theme this year was “Te Taura Tangata – The Rope of Unity” highlighting the power of diversity and inclusivity.

“My experience at the Race Unity Speech Awards was transformative, wherein my cup was ‘overflowing with aroha and newfound perspective’ through engaging with young leaders advocating for racial unity in Aotearoa, said Isaac.”

“As a judge, I was captivated by the platform of eloquence and thoughtfulness through which rangatahi expressed their ideas on improving race relations, providing a chance for Aotearoa to listen to the leaders of today,” said Isaac.

## Bringing a UNESCO perspective to a panel discussion on disinformation

In December, Secretary General Vicki Soanes was a panellist at a discussion on the effects of disinformation in Parliament. The event, organised by the United Nations Association of New Zealand to mark Human Rights Day, explored ways of safeguarding Human Rights in the digital sphere, with a specific focus on the harmful effects of disinformation.

Vicki was joined on the panel by Dr Nicole Skews-Poole and Ana McAllister, Manager of Public Policy, Funding and Community Engagement at InternetNZ. The panel discussion, masterfully moderated by Dr Avery Smith of He Whenua Taurikura, addressed the effects of the rapid spread of dis-and-misinformation on public trust, democratic processes, and fundamental freedoms. Vicki spoke of the extensive work UNESCO has undertaken to support safe digital environments and the importance of striking the critical balance between combatting harmful falsehoods and safeguarding the fundamental right to freedom of expression.





# Fresh perspective papers – changes in technology, freedom of expression, inclusion and diversity

In 2019, the National Commission contributed a special section to Curriculum Matters with a range of perspectives on Global Citizenship Education – a key area of focus for UNESCO nationally and globally. In 2024, we commissioned a further series, authored by three young emerging writers reflecting their unique perspectives on changes in technology, freedom of expression, inclusion and diversity.

The set of papers opens and closes with commentary from Fiona Cram (Ngāti Pahauwera), Director of Katoa Ltd and Kate Hannah, Director of the Disinformation Project, who contextualised the themes of the papers as they relate to their own areas of interest and experience.

It included opening commentary from our Education Commissioner, Professor Carol Mutch.

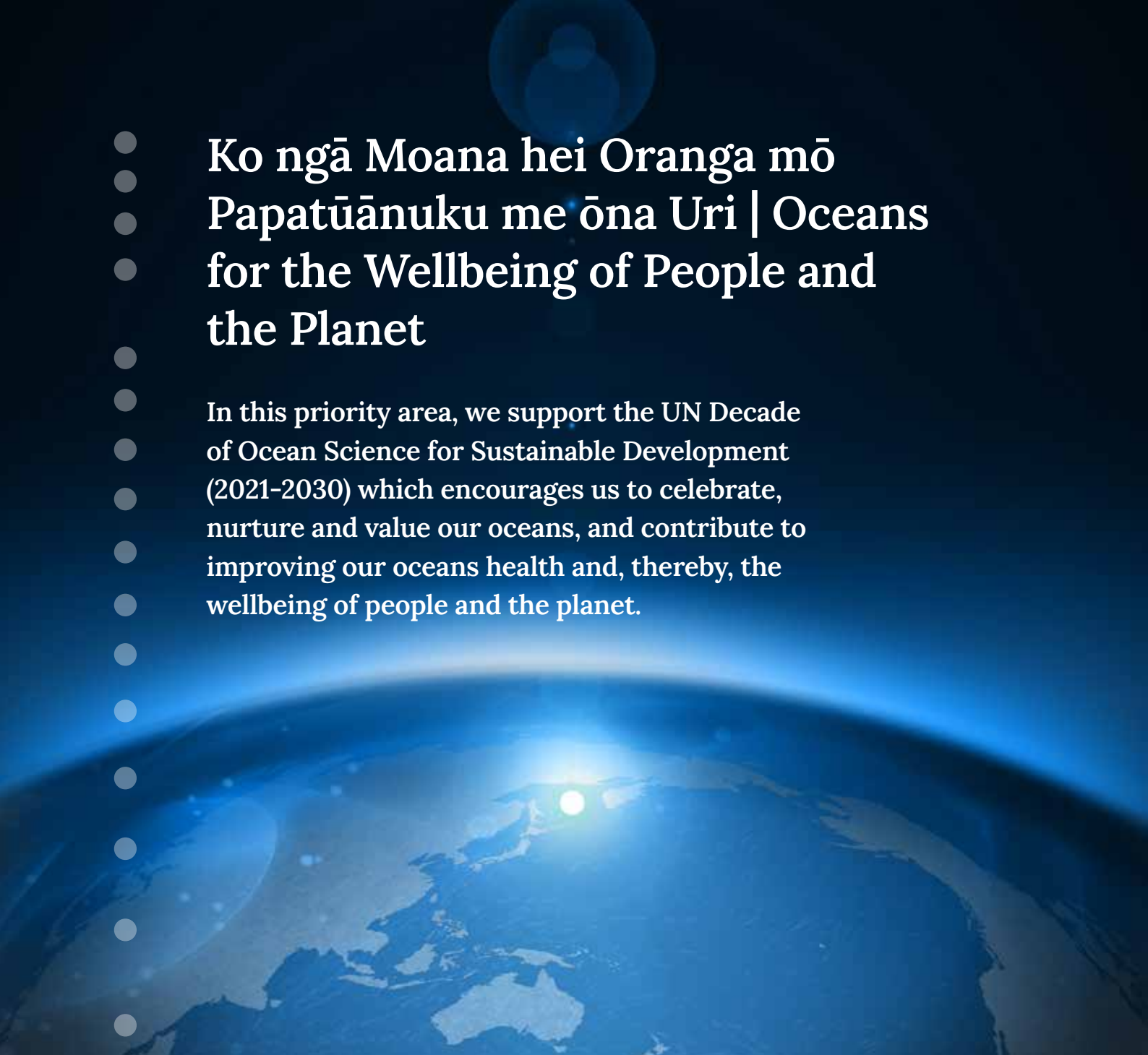
Two of the papers were written by former UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leaders Kauri Tearaura (Ngāti Mahuta) and Katja Neef, while the third was written by Hannah Christini, a final year teacher education student.

The three share how their personal identities have shaped their interest in, understandings of, and engagement with modern technologies and the complex issues that they raise.

Kauri picked up the themes of identity and diversity. He argued how the use of current technologies, when left unchecked, leads to hate speech and hate crime, especially against minority communities. Katja examined technology and media in Aotearoa New Zealand through a migrant lens, which enabled her to highlight structural racism and the harm that it has done, arguing that it will continue to do so unless we begin to take individual responsibility for our part in its perpetuation.

Hannah added a note of hope. After she outlined her motivation to become a teacher, she discussed how she intends to prepare the young people she will teach to be more discerning consumers of technology and media, in order to build a more inclusive society.





# Ko ngā Moana hei Oranga mō Papatūānuku me ōna Uri | Oceans for the Wellbeing of People and the Planet

In this priority area, we support the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) which encourages us to celebrate, nurture and value our oceans, and contribute to improving our oceans health and, thereby, the wellbeing of people and the planet.

## Natural Sciences Commissioner, Linda Faulkner, appointed to Ocean Decade Advisory Board

Our Natural Sciences Commissioner Linda Faulkner was one of 15 global experts appointed to the UN Decade of Ocean Science Advisory Board in 2024, chosen for her deep expertise on oceans.

Linda's experience and background, as co-lead of the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge and in governance roles with a focus on applying mātauranga Māori alongside contemporary science, reflect an actively evolving national and regional approach. An approach with a emphasis

on reclaiming, revitalising, and restoring indigenous governance, knowledge and practice in environmental decision-making, research and management.

The Decade Advisory Board provides strategic advice on Decade implementation to UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the UN body tasked with coordinating the Ocean Decade. Members are selected for a period of two years and serve in their individual capacities.

## UN Ocean Decade Conference



The National Commission led a New Zealand delegation, which had a high-profile presence at the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona in April.

The Conference provided an opportunity for the National Commission to share New Zealand's unique approach to the Decade, which emphasises the importance of indigenous knowledge. It was also a chance to contribute to the Decade Action Plan, connect with others who are supporting and promoting the Decade worldwide. As well as to bring back enhanced understandings of ocean science and the Decade's role in improving the health and wellbeing of our oceans. Learn more on page 22.

## AMSA & NZMSS Conference

Natural Sciences Commissioner Linda Faulkner presented at the jointly held Australian Marine Sciences Association and NZ Marine Sciences Society Conference in Hobart in September.

As well as sharing the journey of the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge, Linda gave a presentation on the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. She spoke about the amazing science being undertaken worldwide as part of the Decade and about the importance of indigenous knowledge to help solve some of the most significant marine issues of our time.

The conference brought together more than 900 delegates from across Australia and New Zealand. It provided an opportunity to share knowledge and information about the research and innovative practice occurring within the two nations aimed at the care, protection and responsible use of the marine environment.



"Importantly, traditional Aboriginal owners and communities from around Australia were involved throughout the conference and it was an excellent example of what can be achieved by the inclusion of diverse knowledges and peoples," said Linda.



## Hapori Toitū, Hapori Manawaroa, Hapori Whakamarohi | Sustainable, Resilient and Regenerative Communities

This priority area builds on our initial insights gained under our Global Citizenship Education mahi. We have an important role as a catalyst for New Zealanders to engage in intergenerational lifelong learning and to be innovative and responsible global citizens, within the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This commitment was the driving force behind the decision to fund and/or participate in the following initiatives.

# Summit “Resilient Indigenous Communities”

The National Commission supported an International Development Design Summit (IDDS) entitled ‘Resilient Indigenous Communities’ which was held on the East Coast Tairāwhiti in late 2024.

The goal of the summit was to retool, upskill and connect local indigenous Māori community members or innovators with other indigenous change-makers, innovators, designers, sector specialists, faculty and students of indigenous innovation work from around the world. In order to tap into various indigenous knowledge systems and skills.

Education Commissioner Professor Carol Mutch gave a keynote address during the summit. The summit brought local East Coast participants together with national and international participants.

They worked across six project teams within three local communities, creating technology prototypes for sustainable livelihoods.



# Asia Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED6)

As Education Commissioner, Professor Carol Mutch took part in the 6th Asia Pacific Meeting of Education (APMED6) in Bangkok in September.

The four-day meeting was attended by more than 200 participants from 30 countries, including Pacific representation from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Fiji. APMED6 focussed on issues facing the Asia-Pacific region and progress towards SDG 4.

Participants also agreed on a set of actions outlining the region’s position to be tabled at the Global Education Meeting (GEM) which took place in Brazil in October.

Carol noted that despite the diversity of countries involved, there was remarkable consistency in the issues discussed and solutions suggested, resulting in strong agreement on the recommendations which went to GEM 24.



*Special Feature:*

Sharing Aotearoa's Unique  
Approach to the Decade of Ocean  
Science on a Global Stage at the  
2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference



# The 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference

The 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference took place over three days in April, in Barcelona, Spain. The global conference set joint priorities for the Decade and celebrated Decade achievements in the three years since the Decade was launched. The conference was hosted by Spain and co-organised with IOC (UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) and brought together the Ocean Decade community and partners.

## Aotearoa’s Powerful Contribution

New Zealand was represented at the Conference by our Culture Commissioner Dr Dan Hikuroa and Natural Sciences Commissioner Linda Faulkner, as well as Master Navigator Jack Thatcher and Aurere Thatcher. Yana Selyuk, our Senior Advisor, supported the delegation.

New Zealand’s delegation had the honour of being the first nation to present at the global conference, taking to the stage after the heads of state concluded their opening. Jack Thatcher, began with an opening plenary and a captivating kōrero highlighting the value and important role of indigenous ocean science knowledge, particularly Mātauranga Māori.

Culture Commissioner Dan Hikuroa described the audiences’ admiration at Jack Thatcher’s opening plenary as his greatest highlight from the Conference: “He had the audience spellbound”.

Within Jack Thatcher’s presentation, he launched *Tāwera, Te Aramahiti, the morning star guides eastward: reviving traditional navigation knowledge in the Pacific*, a powerful paper exploring Pacific Ocean knowledge and the heritage of long-distance navigation and wayfinding. The paper, collated and written by Jeff Evans from knowledge contributed by Jack Thatcher, prioritises the vast knowledge and voices of waka voyaging navigators. See page 25.

Natural Sciences Commissioner, Linda Faulkner, also participated in a panel discussion entitled *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Community-Engaged Ocean Science* – a collaboration between the National Commission, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Pacific Community SPC and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, and moderated by Culture Commissioner Dan Hikuroa.



## “A Deeply Valuable Event”

Linda Faulkner reflected back on the Conference.

“As a result of our contribution and participation in the Conference both the profile and importance of indigenous knowledge has been elevated, as well as the value of indigenous knowledge in achieving both SDG14 and the Decade aims.”

The collaboration between the National Commission, SPC, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation established at the Conference is now in the early stages of forming an indigenous knowledge research programme to sit within the Decade, working with the IOC Decade Coordination Unit (DCU). As well as this, the DCU recently employed a fixed-term advisor specialising in

indigenous knowledge from the Pacific, to lead the development of an indigenous knowledge strategy for the Decade.

The Conference was deeply valuable in its significant international exposure and network creation opportunities. As a result of the Conference, Linda has been invited to facilitate part of the ‘Blue Talks’ symposia in Christchurch, looking ahead to the One Ocean Science Congress and the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice in June 2025. She was also invited to present and contribute to the December 2024 second Regional Platform on the Deep Sea in Tahiti, organised by the French Research Institute for Development on behalf of the French State Secretariate for the Sea.



“ The exposure that events like the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference provide for the work of the National Commission is invaluable and provides an international stage for New Zealand representatives to highlight our unique approach to the Decade. This prompts real impact, international contribution and connectively highlights key Decade opportunities such as indigenous knowledge. ”

LINDA FAULKNER



# Tāwera, Te Aramahiti



*The morning star guides eastward: reviving traditional navigation knowledge in the Pacific*

*Knowledge contributed by Master Navigator, Jack Thatcher collated and written by Jeff Evans*

*Designed and illustrated by James Edwards*

Drawing on the knowledge of Master Navigator Jack Thatcher, collated and written by Jeff Evans, and illustrated by James Edwards, this paper highlights the contribution of indigenous knowledges to ocean science, focusing on navigation from a Māori knowledge perspective.

The paper prioritises and centres the voices and vast knowledge of those who know and understand voyaging waka best – the navigators.

Lidia Brito, UNESCO Assistant Director General for the Natural Sciences, describes the paper as “an exceptional piece of work which brings to our attention the great reawakening in the Pacific of ocean knowledge, wayfinding, star charts and the heritage of long-distance navigation without instruments”.

The paper was commissioned by the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO, in conjunction with UNESCO’s Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) section within the Natural Sciences Sector in support of the Decade of Ocean Science and the UN Decade of Indigenous Languages.





# Our Programmes

## Tāone Auaha | Creative Cities

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network is made up of 350 cities around the world driven by an aim to support an international dialogue on cities that are resilient, inclusive and sustainable. In 2024, the international network covered seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music. The National Commission is proud to share Aotearoa New Zealand's four Creative Cities' 2024 highlights.

## Ōtepoti Dunedin poets celebrate 10 years of UNESCO City of Literature designation



### Poem for Ōtepoti

Dear Ōtepoti, you looked  
after Hone, Alistair, Janet,  
Meg, Fleur, Jacqui, Vincent  
and all our other writers  
so that I think of them  
thinking up and dreaming  
their poems, and stories  
because you gave a place  
to perch words on a page.  
So these plain words nestled  
on a plain page grew next  
to your beaches and whenua  
with the seals, whales,  
albatrosses, penguins and  
koau shags, the flax and toetoe  
spears, following the flights  
of air and sea flowing  
not far from the streets  
at Robbie Burns's feet,  
and our ancestors' marae  
at Ōtākou and Waikouaiti.  
Here's a toast to you,  
some gold, and forests,  
Dunedin.

**ROBERT SULLIVAN**

On National Poetry Day, Dunedin Public Libraries, NZ Society of Authors Otago/Southland Branch and Dunedin UNESCO City of Literature joined forces to host a free sold-out event. The event celebrated Dunedin's extraordinary poets and Dunedin City of Literature's 10th birthday year.

The night was filled with jazz by the Bill Martin Trio, captivating poetry performances, the

announcement of the 2024 National Poetry Day competition winners, and a very special themed birthday cake thanks to Criollo Designer Cakes.

To celebrate this significant occasion, and to gather together the remarkable collaborative poems written especially for the night, NZ Society of Authors published the collection perch - a surprise gift from the poets to Dunedin UNESCO City of Literature.

## The 10th anniversary year cakes continue ...

From book launches to poetry readings, festivals to workshops, Dunedin's 10-year anniversary has been packed with meaningful events that highlighted Dunedin's rich literary past and extraordinary creative community. Each event brought people together to share their love of words, to honour the past, and to look forward to a vibrant literary future. To mark the 10th anniversary, the City of Literature added an extra touch of sweetness to some collaborations, including those described below, with beautifully crafted cakes thanks to Botanical Kitchen.

- Weaver, sculptor, photographer and curator Pam McKinlay celebrated the launch of her latest book, *flows like water*, at the Dunedin Community Gallery.
- City of Literature South D Poet Lorikeet, Jenny Powell, led poetry workshops for the *SuperGrans*, helping each participant to explore their secret aspirations through writing.

The poems and accompanying artwork will be published as part of a 10th anniversary legacy book series as a special keepsake for the poets and their whānau.

- The *New Zealand Society of Authors Roadshow* offered a day of connection, learning, and inspiration, featuring keynote sessions, workshops, masterclasses, and discussions with some of the country's leading writers.
- In September, the *New Zealand Young Writers Festival* also turned 10. The programme featured 17 free events, including panel discussions, workshops, slam poetry, and performances.
- Poet, performer, and activist *Hinemoana Baker* treated Dunedin to a special poetry reading and conversation with poet, academic, and editor Robert Sullivan, joined by Rauhina Scott-Fyfe and Ada Duffy.

## Poet Alison Glenny awarded a six-week residency in the City of Literature's 10th anniversary year

Ōtepoti Dunedin UNESCO City of Literature and the Caselberg Trust were excited to welcome the first writer from Aotearoa to the Caselberg Trust Margaret Egan Cities of Literature Writers Residency, Kāpiti Coast poet Alison Glenny.

Alison resided and wrote at the beautiful Caselberg House in Whakaohorahi Broad Bay for six weeks, from November to mid-December. Alison said, 'For me the residency offered a period of uninterrupted time to focus on the early stages of bringing a new project into being. I also valued the opportunity to spend time in Ōtepoti Dunedin and to deepen my connections with the writing community, to experience the inspiring environment of Caselberg House and its surroundings, and to join the community of writers who have benefited from the legacy and generosity of Margaret Egan.'

This was the second year of the residency, which invites applications annually, alternating between writers from Aotearoa and internationally.



Alison Glenny

## Elevating indigenous voices on the international stage

Wellington City of Film attended the UNESCO Creative Cities Network AGM, which took place in Portugal in July. Madeleine Hakaraia de Young, the new Festival Director for Māoriland Film Festival in Ōtaki, also attended the meeting with the support of the National Commission.

Madeleine has developed and run Māori Youth Development Programmes over the last five years, serving as a critical platform for nurturing and promoting indigenous talent in the screen sector.

Wellington UNESCO Creative City of Film advocated for her attendance in order to showcase Māori Youth Development programmes to a global audience, emphasising the importance of cultural authenticity and youth empowerment in the screen industry, and to build global connections.

With more than 350 Creative Cities across



the globe – many of which have indigenous populations – the AGM provided a crucial platform for sharing best practice and exploring collaborative projects that leverage the creative arts to promote and preserve indigenous languages and cultures.

Madeline's attendance highlighted Wellington City of Film's commitment to support and elevate indigenous voices on the international stage.

## Supporting Local Film Festivals and Screenings

Wellington City of Film supported a number of different film festivals in 2024, including the world's largest indigenous film festival, Māoriland Film Festival, the Wairarapa Film Festival and Children's film festival, Around the World in Eight Days.

Wellington City of Film supported Wellington City schools and tertiary students to attend the Māoriland Film Festival rangatahi day with workshops and Virtual Reality experiences. Students experienced Atuatanga – A VR game where the players have to awaken Atua to help solve the planet from destruction due to climate change.

They also supported a special screening of *Ngā Tohunga Whakatere* – The Navigators,

a planetarium film sharing the story of Māori, Pasifika and, later, European navigation towards Aotearoa through the eyes of a young girl, Moko.



## Indigenous animation exchange programme

The AGM also resulted in Wellington City of Film partnering with Galway City of Film, in the form of an exchange programme to support rangatahi working in animation and to promote the Cities' respective indigenous languages – Te Reo Māori

and Irish Gaelic. The programme will see New Zealand animators fluent in te reo travel to Ireland to learn from and exchange knowledge with Gaelic speaking animators.

## Empowering Wāhine Pitch

Wellington City of Film supported Pitchfest to deliver the 'Empowering Wāhine to Pitch' event, which was dedicated to boosting confidence and equipping wāhine creators with the skills to pitch their ideas for a TV series, feature film, or video game.

The event was incredibly successful with more than 60 people attending, of which 80 percent were aged 17 to 25, and from a diverse range of backgrounds. The turnout and support for this event clearly demonstrated a strong demand for more female-centric film industry events and a growing appetite for original animated content in New Zealand.



## Auckland UNESCO City of Music

### Music Advisory Board

Auckland City of Music established a 25-person Music Advisory Board consisting of 14 people from the music sector, representing a broad cross-section of the music ecosystem, such as venues, broadcasting, education, recording, publishing, performing and more. The remainder of the board consists of Council staff, also representing a broad range of interests, such as economic development, festivals and events, arts and culture, and regional services.

The objective of the Board is to leverage the collective industry and city connections and expertise to benefit key priority areas of the Auckland Music



Strategy and to assist in the development of policies and initiatives that enhance the music sector in the region.

# Shain Shapiro's Aotearoa New Zealand book tour

Auckland City of Music welcomed leading music ecosystem expert Dr. Shain Shapiro to our shores in August. Shain has been travelling the world promoting his book 'This Must Be The Place: How Music Can Make Your City Better'.

The book is based on Shain's extensive experience in developing music city strategies with his London-based consultancy firm Sound Diplomacy, and his further work with his non-profit company, Centre For Music Ecosystems. Auckland City of Music hosted Shain at speaking events in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch where he was joined by local sector experts.

The tour supports UN Sustainable Development Goal #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.



## Music in Venues: Level Up



Through a funding grant from Creative NZ, Auckland City of Music were able to assist venues, promoters and performers to stage events around

the region. Level Up consisted of micro-grants of \$2,000 each intended to support grassroots music venues and promoters in the upskilling of the music workforce.

Funds could be used for venues and promoters working together to mentor and train new and emerging entrant promoters for the purposes of staging an event, existing promoter communities to mentor and train new and emerging entrant promoters, and venues to facilitate training to upskill staff on sourcing and staging events.

Music in Venues supports UN Sustainable Development Goal #8: Decent Work & Economic Growth.

## Curating UCCN AGM Playlist

Auckland City of Music curated the official playlists of the XVII UNESCO Creative Cities Network Annual Conference in Braga, Portugal. Two playlists were curated featuring 69 performers from 27 Cities of Music. In keeping with the conference theme of "Bringing Youth to the Table", all performers on the playlists were under the age of 25.

In support of UN Sustainable Development Goal #5: Gender Equality, over 60% of the tracks were by female artists. The playlist is available for all to listen to on Spotify.

### Streets for People

In May 2024, Whanganui launched two more streetscape improvement projects as part of the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's Streets for People programme – central Guyton Street and a new public transport hub on lower St Hill Street.

The funding enabled council to work in partnership with the community to co-design streetscape improvements for public transport connections, enhance safety and convenience for pedestrians and cyclists and make Whanganui's streets more inviting, people-friendly and creative.

Both streets feature new public art commissions, including the Glow Gallery, three light boxes along Guyton Street which act as open-air galleries for design submissions across the year, with two dedicated to showing the work of iwi artists. Streets for People was launched with a Guyton Street Party featuring musical and theatre performances, food, activities for children and a decorated bike parade.



### Launch of the Whanganui City of Design Tohu



In October, Whanganui launched their new City of Design tohu. This quality seal was developed to amplify the Whanganui story and elevate the products, designs, projects and creativity of New Zealand's one and only UNESCO City of Design. Whanganui & Partners worked with design agency Extended Whānau to develop the tohu, which symbolises design that has been shaped by the Whanganui Awa. The Awa runs through Whanganui, shaping the land as it flows and nourishes its surroundings. The dynamic winding body of the tohu reflects this and represents the flowing energy of ideas and creativity.

The tohu is free to access through Whanganui's UNESCO City of Design website. Local design-led businesses, cultural, educational and civic institutions can download the tohu and guidelines after signing up to uphold the City of Design principles.



## Whanganui City of Design on the TEDx stage



In October, Whanganui Partners' Dr Emma Bugden spoke about the Creative Cities Network in a TEDx talk at Palmerston North. Her talk used Whanganui's City of Design designation as a framework to discuss how cities can harness creativity to reimagine themselves. Taking in urban development, public transport, accessible design and zombies, Emma argued that *"design is not an abstract concept or an academic pursuit. It is an intentional act that brings about change: innovative products; improvement in the built environment; change in people's lives"*. You can watch the talk here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEM6zEWLBD4>

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## Opening of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery

In November, Whanganui was delighted to open an art gallery redevelopment which reflects a changing city where iwi heritage and partnership are valued.

The newly expanded Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery includes earthquake strengthening and restoration of the existing 100-year-old Sarjeant Gallery. As well as the addition of a new, modern wing, Te Pātaka o Tā Te Atawhai Archie John Tairaroa, which was developed through a co-design process between architects Warren and Mahoney and local iwi artist group Te Kāhui Toi o Tūpoho, appointed by iwi entity Te Rūnanga o Tūpoho.

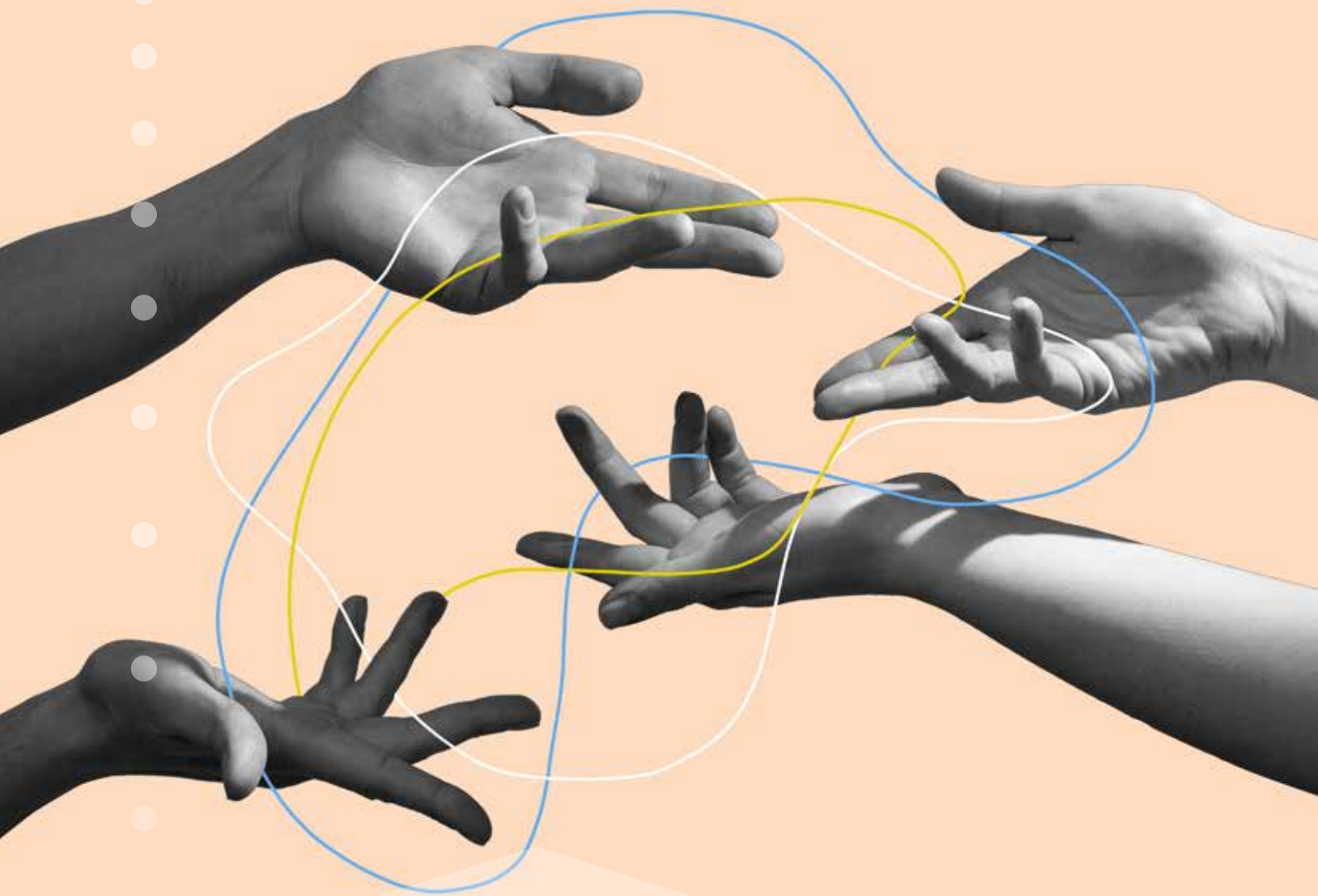
The new \$70 million gallery now spans more than 4,500 sqm and features ten exhibition spaces, a family room, a reading room and library, a classroom, retail space, a café, and publicly accessible event and meeting rooms. The new Gallery sets the city up for the future, enabling stories of Whanganui to be told and connecting Whanganui to the wider world.



# UNESCO Chairs Programme

Launched in 1992, the UNESCO Chairs Programme promotes international inter-university cooperation and networking to enhance institutional capacities through knowledge sharing and collaborative work.

Aotearoa New Zealand has four Chairs. Some of their highlights are captured on pages 35-37.



# UNESCO Chair on Dance and Social Inclusion

The key development objective for the UNESCO Chair on Dance and Social Inclusion is to extend practices, pedagogies and understandings of the ways in which dance can effectively support social inclusion in diverse cultural contexts.

In 2024, the Chair maintained a successful joint Master's programme with the Beijing Dance Academy, graduating 12 students, six of whom have progressed to the PhD programme. The Chair has further established a joint Bachelor's degree with Beijing Dance Academy and a joint Master's degree with Beijing Normal University.

Research is a key aspect of the Chair. In 2024 the Chair published five books on dance education in China, India, Uganda and Aotearoa New Zealand; published 20 articles and chapters in leading international journals of education; presented keynotes at conferences and institutions in 12 countries and established research consortia with universities in Norway, Finland, Germany and Italy.



## Co-chairs Professors Ralph Buck and Nicholas Rowe

The Chair is involved in large-scale, three year Horizon Europe projects involving consortia of institutes across the world. In this activity, the Chair is a partner in the €3 million Horizon Europe project D@rts (commenced February 2024) and is the lead of the €3 million Horizon Europe project INTRACOMP (commencing February 2025).

Partnerships and networks for the exchange of knowledge and understanding of dance, curricula and social development were established at Universities in Palestine, India, China, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Norway and Canada.

The Chair was also involved in enhancing participation in dance for social inclusion in diverse community contexts, through activities associated with research and teaching, globally.



# UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Livelihoods



## Professor Stuart Carr

During 2024, the Chair on Sustainable Livelihoods led work across three project networks: SLiC (Sustainable Livelihoods Collaboration); GLOW (Global Living Organizational Wage); and Clean SLATE (Sustainable Livelihoods and The Ecosystem).

Each of the networks had three focuses – teaching, research, and service.

**SLiC** – This project has members affiliated with seven institutions: Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok; Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines; the National University of Vietnam; Massey University of New Zealand; University of Cape Town, South Africa; Adam Smith School of Business in Glasgow University; and School of Business at the University of Edinburgh Scotland. This network is currently developing and trialling a cloud-based course called Sustainable Livelihoods, at Masters-degree level, which will enable shared cloud teaching, from a shared and secure platform. Each hub

can freely contribute, and draw down, whichever modules suit its own autochthonous course on Sustainable Livelihoods. Read a full description of this project and how it will eventually result in a full degree programme: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/10384162241278801>

**GLOW** – This project has been co-conducting research on what is a living wage in everyday Humanistic terms. Project GLOW works across 30 countries to connect applied research with decent work policy. GLOW has enabled multiple visiting scholarships and co-produced a number of peer-reviewed research publications relating to living wages and their role in sustaining livelihoods. In 2024, GLOW has notably widened its ambit and ethos to include the triple bottom line of people, planet and prosperity for all, which underlines the SDGs as a whole. All the research is focused on the ILO call for fresh human-centred approaches to decent work post-2020: <https://webapps.ilo.org/digitalguides/en-gb/story/globalcall#covid-impact>

**Clean Slate** – This project is a global network of 20 leading figures in decent work and sustainable livelihoods, structure and function. All are committed to constructing a Sustainable Livelihoods Index (SL-I). The project has been working towards hosting a meeting at UNESCO in Paris, in 2025, to co-build the first SL-I. Key stakeholder groups include vocational counsellors, students and existing workers seeking just transitions into Sustainable Livelihoods, occupational sectors seeking to improve their sustainability (raise their rankings/recruitment), and government departments seeking to invest in workforce training for just transitioning into sustainable livelihoods. The Index is designed as a handy tool to both inform and incentivise sustainable livelihoods. SL-Is will be co-produced regionally and annually.

# UNESCO Chair on Open Educational Resources (OER)

New Zealand's UNESCO Chair in Open Educational Resources, Dr Mackintosh, is based at the OER Foundation (OERF), a small, independent, not-for-profit organisation headquartered at Te Pūkenga (New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology). The OERF provides collaborative networking opportunities and practical support to governments and institutes to achieve their strategic objectives via open education.

2024 saw OERF continue its work in the Pacific, powering the Pacific Partnership for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning's open online courses. In partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the OERF's digital infrastructure



**Dr Wayne Mackintosh**

hosted the Pacific's growing inventory of OER-enabled online courses providing an innovative and low-cost solution to widening access to the professional development of thousands of teachers.

# UNESCO Chair in Inter-religious Understanding and Relations in New Zealand and the Pacific



**Emeritus Professor Paul Morris**

The UNESCO Chair in Inter-religious Understanding and Relations in New Zealand and the Pacific is one of 30 UNESCO Chairs, across 25 countries that are part of the UNESCO UNITWIN Network

for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Intercultural Understanding (IDIU), which aims to promote dialogue among different religions, spiritual and humanistic traditions. It aims to share knowledge in order to challenge ignorance and prejudices and foster mutual respect.

The Chair has been involved in a number of projects in 2024, including:

- Research on religious literacy and competency in New Zealand.
- Exploring the influence and impact of international lobbies and think tanks in New Zealand (a revision of the book "New Rights New Zealand: Myths, Moralities and Markets" published Auckland University Press in 2004).
- Creating a guidebook on resilient religious communities to enable religious communities across Auckland to engage with emergency management. Work is now underway to create guidebooks for other parts of New Zealand.

# Ngā Puna Mahara o te Ao | Memory of the World

Four new inscriptions were added to the Aotearoa  
New Zealand Memory of the World Register in 2024,  
bringing the total number of inscriptions to 55.



The new inscriptions were celebrated at a number of special events held across the motu in late 2024.

Initial celebrations took place at the Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, Dunedin in late August.

“The event was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the four new inscriptions to the UNESCO New Zealand Memory of the World Register, and in particular, an important collection of Janet Frame’s papers,” said our Secretary General, Vicki Soanes, who spoke at the event.

“The life of this remarkable writer has connections to two other UNESCO designations – the Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark, which also hosts Janet Frame’s childhood home, and the city where Janet spent most of her life, Dunedin, now a UNESCO Creative City of Literature. This is so very UNESCO – recognising and joining together the many threads that connect us to each other and places,” Vicki said.

The event, which was also the opening of a new exhibition of Janet Frame’s personal and literary papers, took place on Janet Frame’s 100th birthday.

The other three inscriptions added to the Register were documentary series Tangata Whenua: The People of the Land; the Frank Sargeson Collection; and the William James Harding Collection of Whanganui-Rangitikei photographs and negatives. These were celebrated in a special event held in Wellington in October, followed by an event hosted by Whanganui, which recognised the William James Harding Collection.

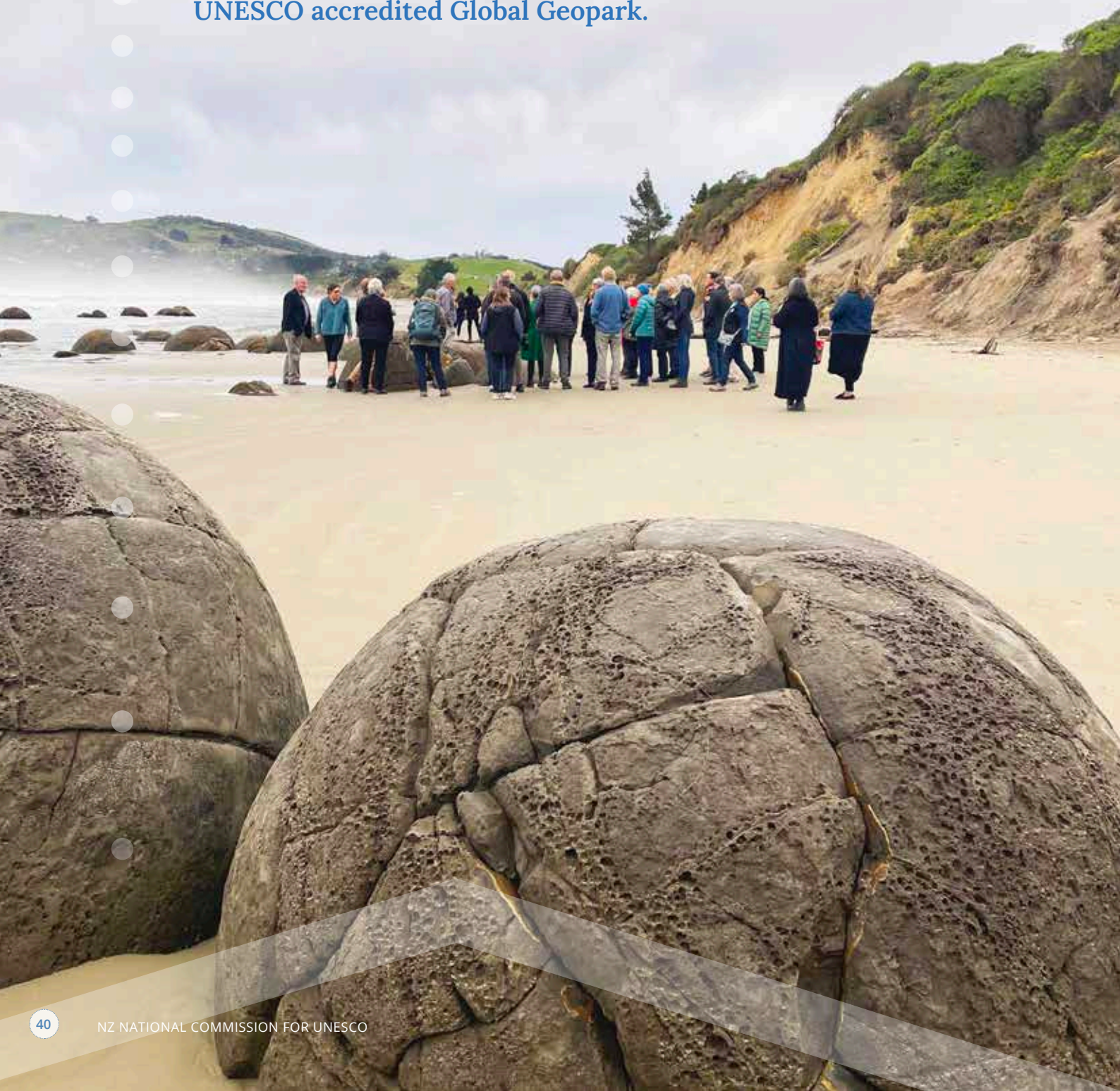
Memory of the World Chair Jane Wild congratulated the five institutions recognised by the 2024 inscriptions for their efforts.

“To be inscribed on the Memory of the World register we require the marriage of unique documentary heritage content and a research environment with capability to preserve the collections and make them available. This is an interesting professional dynamic that these four collections demonstrate ranging from manuscript drafts to shopping lists, through recorded interviews and glass plate negatives of 19th century Whanganui.”



# Taiao Ahurei Huriao | UNESCO Global Geoparks

In May 2023, the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark was officially endorsed as Aotearoa New Zealand's first UNESCO accredited Global Geopark.





The UNESCO Global Geopark designation recognises Waitaki Whitestone Geopark’s outstanding geological, scientific and cultural heritage, its foundation partnership with Te Runaka o Moeraki, local Council and community support, as well as an enduring commitment to sustainable development, research and education.

2024 has seen the Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark continue to evolve and grow in international stature. It has done this through interactions with its global counterparts and its growing reputation domestically, whilst

increasingly enabling economic growth and learning opportunities for the Geopark’s local community.

During this important transition after receiving the UNESCO designation, the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark Trust was ably led throughout 2024 by Waitaki born Chair and highly regarded professional Rachel Plieger.

In February 2024, Lynley Browne was appointed into a new general management role to reflect the growing scope of the Geopark and alongside Geoscientist Sasha Morriss, other staff and volunteers the team have been passionately committed to building on the Geopark’s strong foundations and have made significant progress in several strategic areas.

In late 2024 the executive team also moved into a new and more visible working space within the Ōamaru Heritage Precinct – enabled by the generous support of the Ōamaru Whitestone Civic Trust.

## Chinese Delegation visits Geopark

The Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark was pleased to host delegations from two UNESCO Global Geoparks in China during 2024 (Tianzhushan and Qinling Zhongnanshan) which included the official signing of ‘intention to cooperate’ agreements, strengthening the relationship with these UNESCO Geoparks.



## Redevelopment of Vanished World

The planned redevelopment of the Vanished World Fossil Centre in the small town of Duntroon into a dynamic education, learning and information hub within the UNESCO Global Geopark has been a top priority. The Trust has been successful in securing several grants towards achieving this and a new contemporary and interactive museum exhibition concept has been developed in association with the support of many subject matter experts and a specialist agency now appointed. A revitalised centre will preserve and promote the area's natural and cultural heritage and important legacy.

## Building Connections

The team has participated in several important conferences and working groups including Geoscientist Sasha Morriss being an invited guest speaker at Sydney Geofest 2024 and presenting a poster on Geotourism at the New Zealand Geoscience Society Conference in late 2024. The Geopark once again successfully hosted

the third year University of Canterbury Business School Tourism class, and have been involved in significant education outreach to school age children including participation in an Enviroschools Hui, the North Otago Principals Conference and EarthFest 2024 in Dunedin.

## Making National and International Headlines

The Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark has increasingly attracted media attention with coverage in the Air New Zealand Koru magazine (one million readers) and together with the Alps 2 Ocean cycle trail that runs through it, featured as part of 'Set Out' a BBC Travel series. The series celebrates slow, self-propelled travel that invites readers to get outside and reconnect with the

world in a safe and sustainable way.

The BBC feature writer Tracey Croke was very taken with the region, taking considerable time to understand the important geology of the area.

Read the article here: <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20241023-new-zealands-vanished-world-of-ancient-megafauna>





# Ngā kaupapa i tautokona e mātou | Projects we supported

The National Commission funds projects, events, programmes and initiatives with a strong connection to our mission to *deepen connections between the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and UNESCO globally through the sharing of ideas and building capability for a sustainable, healthy and more peaceful future.*

In 2024, we supported more than 15 projects, including the following events and initiatives.



## Ngā Kōrero series

Ngā Kōrero is a free webinar series designed to foster better communication in relation to various ocean-related topics. The series features experts in marine science and mātauranga Māori, who speak on new discoveries and progress in marine protection and increase awareness of opportunities for action.

The webinars are coordinated and moderated by the Sir Blake Marine Education & Recreation Centre, organisers of the annual Seaweek, and are supported by the Live Ocean Charitable

Trust and the National Commission.

In 2024, the series consisted of three episodes:

- Vulnerable Ecosystems and Marine Protected Areas
- Taking Action: inspiring community stories
- Ocean Stewardship in the Pacific.

The final webinar explored the significance of intertwining indigenous knowledge and values with the community's needs to achieve positive outcomes for the marine environment. It featured presentations by our Culture Commissioner Dr Dan Hikuroa and National Decade Committee member James Tremlett.

## Manta Watch

Manta Watch New Zealand (MWNZ) initially toured their short film 'Manta Watch – Discovering Aotearoa's Gentle Giants' around Auckland, the Hauraki Gulf Islands and the Coromandel (key manta hotspots), in 2023.

Manta rays are majestic ocean wonders and have been called the 'gateway drug' for marine conservation. The project aims to increase ocean protections and improve ocean health, whilst engaging and connecting communities with the species' magnificence, as well as the wider threats these vulnerable marine ecosystems face.

National Commission funding enabled MWNZ to extend the film's reach in 2024 to include other important manta areas including Whakatane, Taranaki, Kerikeri and Wellington.



The screenings – which also included a 30-minute Q&A session – were extremely popular, selling out in all locations, enabling the film tours aim, to facilitate connection and inspire ocean advocacy within the community.

## Auckland hosts Commonwealth Association of Museums 2024 conference

The Commonwealth Association of Museums 2024 conference was hosted in the Pacific Region for the first time in the organisation's 50-year history. The theme for the conference was *'The View from Here: Sustainability, Community and Knowledge'*.

The conference enabled delegates from across the Commonwealth to share museum experiences and challenges from their perspectives, which helped to identify sector-wide commonalities despite geographical differences.

The programme was specifically designed to create new links and to find synergies and potential partnerships with museum practitioners across the Commonwealth who deal with the shared legacies of colonialism.

Alongside the CAM conference, senior museum representatives from nine Pacific countries participated in bespoke sessions of the special Museums in the Pacific Network initiative, which focused on strengthening relations, knowledge sharing, and professional development.



# Presenting Aotearoa New Zealand research at UNESCO Digital Learning Week 2024.



Otago University Professor  
Nathalie Wierdak

We supported Otago University Professor Nathalie Wierdak to present research on using AI to support Māori and Pasifika students into higher education, at the UNESCO Digital Learning Week in Paris in September.

Nathalie presented on a project undertaken in 2024 which focused on utilising generative AI to support the transition of Māori and Pasifika students into higher education. The project developed equity-centric prompts using ChatGPT to create tailored communication strategies for first-year commerce students at the University of Otago.

The planning phase involved identifying the specific challenges faced by these underrepresented groups, including their need for culturally responsive teaching methods and enhanced communication strategies. By engineering AI prompts aligned with these needs, the initiative sought to enhance engagement and reduce anxiety around academic expectations.

During the execution phase, the AI-generated prompts were integrated into various communications, such as assignment instructions and emails. The initiative was designed to be ongoing, with data collected across the academic year to evaluate effectiveness.

The project found that there was a significant increase in student engagement, particularly among Māori and Pasifika students, who reported feeling more supported in their transition to university life. Student feedback indicated a reduction in anxiety regarding assignments, as AI-enhanced instructions were clearer and more culturally responsive. Initial data showed an improvement in academic performance among underrepresented groups, narrowing the performance gap with other students.



## Te Rito Toi – Early Childhood addition

Te Rito Toi is an online resource developed to support teachers when they first return to school following major traumatic or life changing events, such as the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. It provides research-informed practical classroom activities and lesson plans to help children better understand their changed world and to begin to see themselves as being part of the promise of new and better futures.

In 2023, with the support of a National Commission grant, work began on developing an Early Childhood edition of Te Rito Toi.

An extensive research phase identified a global lack of arts-based resources to support children’s well-being post-crisis, in particular, for early childhood learning.

The project is underpinned by a trauma-informed and holistic wellbeing approach, while aligning with the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood curriculum, Te Whariki.

The resource was designed by a collaboration of 20 early childhood educators, school leaders, teaching artists, academics, librarians, and wellbeing

experts. Three design workshops were held, which resulted in the co-development of eleven art and play-based learning experience activities.

Five of the activities were piloted in childhood environments in Napier, Auckland, and Maui (Hawaii, USA). The pilot received positive feedback and enabled the revision of activities to strengthen their impact and delivery.



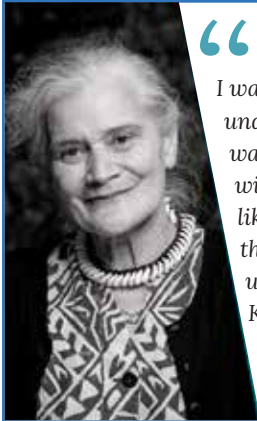
## *Special Feature:*

# UNESCO International Days

UNESCO designates specific days as occasions to mark particular events or topics, in order to promote through action UNESCO's objectives. We promote a number of these days, that align with our mission and priority areas. We do this in a variety of ways, including promoting the days across our social media platforms. For many of these days we ask our Commissioners and Youth Leaders to share why these days resonate with them. Opposite is a snippet of their reflections on a variety of these days.







“

*I want women and girls to understand that they're going to walk into many rooms where they will be the only one that looks like them or has the knowledge they have. So, be strong and, use that voice. Faamalosī, Kia kaha*

”

Professor Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop  
Social Sciences Commissioner  
NZ National Commission for UNESCO

#WomensDay #UnescoNZ



“

*I am excited to celebrate women around the world whose labour in both personal and professional spaces often goes unnoticed. Investing in women and young girls is key to creating sustainable and safe futures where everyone thrives.*

”

Hinauri Apa-Fepulea'i  
UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader  
NZ National Commission for UNESCO

#WomensDay #UnescoNZ



“

*On the International Day of Education, take a moment to consider the gift of education that we take for granted when, for many others, it is withheld, inaccessible or disrupted by war, conflict and political turmoil.*

”

Professor Carol Mutch  
Educational Commissioner  
NZ National Commission for UNESCO

#DayofEducation24 #UnescoNZ



“

*Storytelling is the heart of many indigenous cultures and is vital to their survival. For this year's Indigenous People's Day, I encourage everyone to engage with and share films, books, podcasts etc, that showcase the rich tapestry of our indigenous communities.*

”

Adriana Bird  
Special Advisor Youth

#IndigenousPeople #IDWIP24



“

*It's very difficult to form effective policy for future cohorts without the input of future cohorts. Today reminds me just how important co-designing policy alongside youth is for changemaking.*

”

Wesley Tanuvasa  
UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader  
NZ National Commission for UNESCO

#IntYouthDay #UnescoNZ



“

*Our voice should not be dismissed for our bright-eyed inexperience but treasured equally as our elders' wisdom because of it. It is only together that these bring the dynamism that is the lifeblood of progress - without it we become complacent and lacklustre.*

”

Saeyavan Sitabesan  
UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader

#IntYouthDay #UnescoAotearoaYouthLeader

# Manukura Mātātahi | UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leaders

Our UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leaders were involved in a variety of different initiatives and projects both within Aotearoa New Zealand and globally in 2024. We feature their highlights opposite.



## UN Declaration for Future Generations



In September, world leaders adopted the Pact for the Future and its annexes, including the Declaration on Future Generations which aims to ensure the needs of future generations are considered in present-day decision making.

Special Advisor Youth, Adriana Bird, participated in the Youth and Indigenous consultation which informed the Declaration, where she spoke about the importance of bringing indigenous perspectives and recognising their value in supporting future generations.

## Student Volunteer Army

UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader Wesley Tanuvasa gave a kōrero at the Student Volunteers Army ambassador's forum, doing his part to motivate school students to get engaged in community efforts.

## Festival for the Future

Our Special Advisor Youth, Adriana Bird, joined Wellington Mayor Tory Whanau, Tamara Buckland, and Mike Smith as a keynote speaker in the 2024 Festival's opening session. Her speech, titled "Confessions of an Imperfect Activist", reimagined what it looked like to be a leader and an activist and reflected on the imperfections, hard lessons, and systemic barriers she's encountered throughout her journey.

UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader Isaac Morunga partook in the panel discussion "From Position to Person", which delved into the human stories behind societal systems, showcasing a variety of perspectives on current systems and theories



of change. Isaac appreciated the opportunity to contribute to this crucial conversation and connect with fellow panellists, including business leaders, an academic, public servants, and grassroots activists.

## NEMA exercise – Rū Whenua



During July and August, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) ran a series of workshops that aimed to improve New Zealand's ability to respond to, and recover from, a significant destructive event. These workshops were based on a magnitude 8 Alpine Fault earthquake and brought together 200 of New Zealand's leaders from central and local government, the private and science sectors, iwi Māori, community, and international experts.

Special Advisor Youth, Adriana Bird, attended the workshops bringing a youth and National Commission perspective to the roundtable, in particular in relation to sustainable communities and capturing indigenous knowledge within natural hazard risk mapping.

The National Commission is a strong advocate of involving youth in disaster response planning, which began with the establishment of the Looking Beyond Disaster Forum series, which first took place in Christchurch in 2011.

# Seminar on the UNESCO Global Networks

In early September, our UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader rōpū hosted a “Get to know UNESCO” webinar for youth and youth-led organisations. This included presentations from the Global Youth Community and you-CAN and was aimed at connecting Aotearoa youth with these networks. Attendees were incredibly engaged with the session and were eager to find ways to get involved.

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## Connecting with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Youth Leaders Isaac Morunga and Adriana Bird participated in a roundtable discussion with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

The online discussion was one of several roundtables held by the Canadian Commission for their ‘SYNC together’ initiative. This initiative is aimed at drawing from the knowledge and experience of youth advocates and activists to create resources designed to better support the wellbeing of youth change-makers.

Isaac and Adriana were joined by several Aotearoa-based rangatahi who work, volunteer and advocate across a range of different kaupapa. Key themes from the dialogue included ensuring there is an enabling environment for youth participation, addressing the systemic barriers and structures that perpetuate, and increasing collaboration between rangatahi involved in these spaces. The Canadian Commission will take their findings and feed these back to participants in the coming months for further discussion.



# Farewell and thank you

2024 saw us farewell two of our UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leaders, Kaya Freeman and Hinauri Apa-Fepulea'I, who due to changing commitments had to end their UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader journey early. We thank them for the valuable contribution they made to the National Commission's mahi during their time as Youth Leaders.

We also want to extend a huge thank you to our Special Advisor Youth, Adriana Bird, whose term finished at the end of 2024. Adriana has represented the National Commission for three years, two years as a UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader, before taking on the role of Special Advisor Youth in 2024.

In her role, Adriana left a significant mark both in New Zealand and internationally. She represented UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leaders at the UNESCO Global Youth Forum in 2023, where she was selected as one of the Forum's rapporteurs to deliver youth's recommendations on how UNESCO can support sustainable development to the 42nd UNESCO General Conference. Here in New Zealand, she has continuously worked to inspire young people to make meaningful change,



including through a hopeful keynote address at the 2024 Festival for the Future, where she reminded everyone that what we need to make a difference is to be ourselves.

Adriana's creativity, enthusiasm and ability to connect with young people will leave a lasting impact on both the UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader team and the National Commission. Her contributions reflect a deep commitment to empowering the next generation and fostering meaningful change.



# Ngā piringa huriao | International Connections

## *Bringing Aotearoa to the world and the world to Aotearoa*

Building and retaining international connections is a critical part of our work. A multitude of opportunities presented themselves in 2024 to add an Aotearoa New Zealand lens to UNESCO's future work, and to take knowledge and learnings from our international counterparts to further our mission in Aotearoa New Zealand.

# New Zealand Company Leading UNESCO Construction Training Expert Group

In early 2024, ConCOVE Tūhura were appointed as the Lead Expert for the UNESCO-UNEVOC Bridging Innovation and Learning in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Expert Group (BILT).

The BILT project is implemented by UNESCO-UNEVOC with support from the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

The appointment recognises the contribution

ConCOVE Tūhura is making to reimagining vocational education. It also creates essential international connections to further advance construction and infrastructure training in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Through the concerted efforts of the Expert Group members, the BILT project aims to enhance the relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in building and construction and thereby contribute to the transition to more digital, green and inclusive economies and societies.



## Pacific National Commission Meeting

In May, we hosted the Pacific regional consultation of National Commissions which informed the Director-General's preliminary proposals for the draft of the UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2026-2029.

Our Secretary General, Vicki Soanes, chaired the two-day meeting leading Secretaries General from 17 Pacific Region countries in discussions on the issues affecting the region, key global, regional and sub-regional trends and associated opportunities and risks. Discussions also focused on which recommendations for specific programmatic areas, and implementation approaches, should be prioritised in UNESCO's future programme.

The Pacific expressed the importance of



challenges which are unique to our region, including climate change; being spread out across a large geographical area; maintaining the rich cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge of Pacific countries; as well as the sustainability and effectiveness of educational programmes.

## Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education



New Zealand's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Nikki Reid, deposited the Instrument of Ratification for the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education with UNESCO Assistant Director General (Education), Stefania Giannini.

Aotearoa New Zealand became the 32nd country to ratify the Convention, supporting the universal principles embodied in the Convention for fair, transparent and non-discriminatory recognition of

higher education qualifications, facilitating easier access to higher education and work.

A total of 33 countries have now joined this first-ever treaty on higher education, collectively hosting some 30 percent of the world's 6.4 million internationally mobile students.

Over the past two decades, global higher education enrolments have doubled to reach 254 million students worldwide. Today, more than 6 million are studying abroad, three times more than in 2000. These figures are forecast to double in the next decade, putting enormous pressure on higher education systems to expand their capacity rapidly.

This means that countries need to strengthen international cooperation in higher education, raise its quality at home and worldwide, as well as help make academic mobility and the recognition of qualifications a reality.

UNESCO's Global Convention, adopted in 2019, is a game-changing instrument benefiting students, researchers and job seekers who are looking for having their qualifications recognized in another country or region. At the country level, it will also help to prevent brain drain and facilitate the return home of academic diasporas.

By joining UNESCO's Global Convention, Aotearoa New Zealand commits to forging global cooperation to bring about the fundamental changes needed in higher education to make sure no one is left behind.



# Farewell and thank you to Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop and Carol Mutch

**After six years of incredible mahi we said farewell to our Education Commissioner, Professor Carol Mutch and Social Sciences Commission, Emeritus Professor Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, as their terms came to an end in 2024.**

*We bid them farewell with both sadness at losing their incredible mana and appreciation knowing the National Commission is stronger for the wisdom they have imparted over the last six years. Peggy and Carol share a number of qualities – wisdom, determination, sense of humour and warmth, these will not be forgotten. We wish them all the best for their journey ahead.*

## Professor Carol Mutch



Carol has been an inspiration to all those who worked with her. She made an invaluable contribution to the National Commission's mahi. In particular, in her work on Global Citizenship Education, a major initiative spanning several years. Work that the National Commission can now leave in the hands of others – which is a testament to the strategic nature of Carol's efforts.

Carol has represented New Zealand and the National Commission beautifully on many occasions, most recently at APMED 6 and the 42nd UNESCO General Conference. Her expertise and mana has been recognised by UNESCO.



## Emeritus Professor Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop

Peggy has made many invaluable contributions to our work. In particular, in her work in support of the National Commission's engagement with the Pacific community both in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Additionally, Peggy's support for our Youth Leaders programme, including for the Youth Diversity Forum in the aftermath of the Christchurch terrorist attack, has been significant and appreciated. Peggy's leadership and insights have strongly influenced the success of the programme and the participants themselves.

# Welcome Aboard

In late 2024 we welcomed aboard two new Commissioners, Professor Gail Gillon as our new Education Commissioner and Laura Black as our new Social Sciences Commissioner.

## Professor Gail Gillon

Professor Gail Gillon is an international leader in children’s speech, language and early literacy development. She is Co-Lead Developer of the Better Start Literacy Approach and is also the founding Director of the University of Canterbury Child Well-Being Research Institute. Professor Gillon was Pro Vice Chancellor at the University of Canterbury between 2007 and 2018 and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, the American Speech-Language and Therapy Association, and the New Zealand Speech Language Therapy Association.



## Laura Black

Laura Black has extensive governance experience in economic development, research and community organisations. This includes as the Independent Chair on the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Study Governance Group, as Chair of Otago Science into Action, and as Deputy Chair at the Otago Museum Trust Board. She also sits on the Social Investment Board. She has a consultant for the Family and Sexual Violence Multi-Agency Initiative and the Social Wellbeing Agency and was the Head of the Alumni and Development Office at the University of Otago. She is the Director of the Methodist Mission Southern.



# Contact details

## The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

Chair: **Liz Longworth**

Communication and Information:  
**Vanisa Dhiru MNZM**

Culture: **Dr Daniel Hikuroa**

Natural Sciences: **Linda Faulkner**

Education: **Professor Carol Mutch**  
(until 31 October 2024)

Social and Human Sciences: **Emeritus Professor Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn** (until 31 October 2024)

Education: **Professor Gail Gillon**  
(from 1 November 2024)

Social and Human Sciences: **Laura Black**  
(from 1 November 2024)

Special Advisor Youth: **Adriana Bird**

## Secretariat

Secretary General: **Vicki Soanes**

Senior Advisor: **Yana Selyuk**

Programme Officer: **Silke Bieda**

Communications: **Gabi Tankersley**

Business Advisor: **Roslyn McMahon**

## UNESCO Youth Aotearoa Leaders

Adriana Bird (Special Advisor Youth)

Isaac Morunga

Saeyavan Sitsabesan

Kaya Freeman (January 2024 to June 2024)

Hinauri Apa-Fepulea'i (January 2024 to June 2024)

Madiha Ali (from June 2024)

Wesley Tanuvasa (from June 2024)

## UNESCO offices and links

UNESCO Headquarters Paris  
[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

UNESCO Apia

[www.unesco.org/new/en/apia](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/apia)

UNESCO Bangkok

[www.unescobkk.org](http://www.unescobkk.org)

UNESCO Jakarta

[www.unesco.org/new/en/jakarta/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/jakarta/)

New Zealand Ministry of Education

[www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)

UNESCO Memory of the World, New Zealand

[www.unescomow.org.nz](http://www.unescomow.org.nz)

UNESCO World Heritage, New Zealand

[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

Dunedin: UNESCO City of Literature

[www.cityofliterature.co.nz](http://www.cityofliterature.co.nz)

Auckland: UNESCO City of Music

[www.aucklandcityofmusic.nz](http://www.aucklandcityofmusic.nz)

Wellington: UNESCO City of Film

[www.wellingtoncityoffilm.com](http://www.wellingtoncityoffilm.com)

Whanganui: UNESCO City of Design

<https://cityofdesignwhanganui.nz/>

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Te Kōmihana Matua o Aotearoa mō UNESCO



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