

## UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Tēnā koutou,

Once again the year seems to have sped past me, its hard to believe its November already. The University has been working under COVID restrictions for several months. Students have now been learning remotely for most of the last semester.

This has been a sad and bitter blow for all staff and students. After a very disruptive 2020 we had high hopes that we would get through this year without interruption.

The Foundation is taking a 'keep calm and carry on' approach and fundraising has continued over lockdown and our annual appeal is now rolling out as planned. You should be receiving emails and letters from the Foundation team informing you of the appeal. Our student callers are able to work from home if required. These students are hard-working, humble and, despite occasional nerves, they do a great job of phoning alumni on our behalf. I always look forward to the appeal as its great fun to meet the next crop of students.

Of course, we had planned to open the now restored Refectory on the 11th November.

With Auckland still in lockdown we have postponed this until the 31 March next year. For those that have purchased tickets and cant make the new date, a full refund will be given. If lockdown's persist into next year we will move the event online, but for now we are hopeful that we will be able to proceed with the slightly delayed celebratory dinner and dance on the 31st March.

I can't thank those that contributed to and supported this project enough. Special thanks to the project's ambassadors and champions; Robert Anderson, Simon Barnett, Morva Croxson, Dick Hubbard and John Luxton for their support and care.

Finally, on behalf of the board and staff of the Foundation I would like to acknowledge the very sad passing of Cathy Magiannis on the 30th of September. Cathy was a Foundation Board member from 2015 until March this year and was a kind and gentle person that gave a lot to the Foundation and more broadly to the University in her capacity as Deputy Vice-Chancellor Finance and Technology. Our thoughts are with her family.

Kia Kaha alumni and friends  
Mitch and the Foundation team



Mitch Murdoch, Director,  
Massey University Foundation

### EVENTS COMING UP 2021

**Annual Alumni Appeal:**  
4 – 30 November

**Refectory Gala Dinner:**  
Thursday, 31 March 2022

**Manawatū Donor Christmas Function:**  
Thursday, 25 November

**Wellington Donor Christmas Function:**  
Thursday, 2 December

**Auckland Donor Christmas Function:**  
Date tba

## TRIUMVIRATE OF BEQUESTS RECEIVED!

The Foundation has been delighted to receive three bequests in the last six months.

A gift of \$500,000 has been received from the estate of John Illingworth. John and his partner, Massey alumnae Helen O'DEA (who predeceased him), have left their gift to the CV Fife scholarship. Cliff Fife was Helen's father and he worked at the University from 1934 until 1972.

Dr Fife was a member of the Department of Soils and Field Husbandry from 1934 to 1961 and the first Head of the Department of Soil Science from 1961 to 1972. The original CV Fife fund was created around 1975 from donations from colleagues and friends of Dr Fife. Then, the fund gave an annual grant of \$40.00 to be used for textbooks. In recent years, with a corpus of some \$20,000 the fund has been supporting one post graduate soil science student per annum with a grant of around \$500.00.

Foundation Director Mitch Murdoch says: "This very generous donation from Dr Fife's daughter, Helen and her partner John, will transform this small fund into a really meaningful scholarship that will be able to distribute around \$25,000 per annum. We will now review and update the scholarship regulations to reflect the significance of this gift". The revised CV Fife Scholarship is expected to give its first award in 2023 after the funds have been invested for a full year.

The second gift came from the estate of Rongotea farmer Mr George Dear. George farmed in Rongotea most of his life and in his later years converted 21 acres of remnant swamp forest into protected land under the QEII Trust.

George enjoyed working in this protected forest trapping possums and replanting native trees.

The Rongotea farm had originally been established by George's grandparents who were immigrants from England and were one of the first settler families in the district.

George's gift of \$100,000 will support agricultural and horticultural scholarships at Massey.

Another gift was received from the estate of veterinarian John Milne. John was a New Zealander that trained to become a vet in Australia. John returned to his native New Zealand and established a veterinary practice at South Dunedin.

John's gift of \$100,000 will be used to support post graduate research in Ovine (sheep) at Massey. Head of School of Agriculture and the Environment, Professor Paul Kenyon, commented: "John's gift is timely as there is high interest in research into sheep products including meat and wool and improved efficiency. We are delighted and humbled to receive this fund."

Rose Foote, John's niece said that her uncle wanted to give New Zealanders a helping hand in post graduate education. She said that he was a delightful man with a great sense of humour!







**You are invited to a to celebrate the re-opening of the Refectory Building, Thursday 31 March 2022.**

Join Massey staff, alumni and friends for a great night of food, entertainment and nostalgia.

Tickets include a three course meal and entertainment and are on sale now \$100 each or a table of ten for \$800.

Visit [massey.ac.nz/refectory](https://massey.ac.nz/refectory) for information or email [alumni@massey.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@massey.ac.nz)



## WILDBASE WINS FURTHER DOC FUNDING



L-R: Lucah (9), Tane (9), and Dante (9) Contributed towards kiwi conservation by donating to the Kiwi in Ponui Island project from school fundraising efforts

The Department of Conservation has responded to an appeal from the Massey University Foundation and has delivered a funding boost of more than \$190,000 to Massey's Wildbase Hospital, as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact its revenue.

The funding injection comes as the highly respected hospital, research and teaching facility seeks to increase its scholarship and revenue through the establishment of an Academic Chair.

The latest grant brings the total donated to the hospital by the Department's Wildlife

Institutions Relief Fund (WIRF) to more than \$450,000.

It will mean Wildbase can continue providing medical and surgical care for native wildlife,

despite rising costs, and a fall in revenue, sponsorship and donations due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Professor Jon Huxley, head of Massey's School of Veterinary Science, says the impacts of the pandemic have been extremely challenging for Wildbase and threatened its ability to provide veterinary care. "We are incredibly grateful for the Department's generous support through these extremely challenging times. Their relief aid allows us to continue our work supporting some of the nation's rarest and most vulnerable animals."

A variety of species have benefited from Wildbase's specialist care since the pandemic hit, including kiwi, raptors, seabirds and reptiles, and critically endangered species such as takahe and kakapo, he says. "As Aotearoa New Zealand's leading provider of specialist wildlife veterinary health services, Wildbase provides a critical role supporting the health and welfare of our amazing and often endangered native wildlife."

In the year ending June 30, 2021, Wildbase Hospital treated 501 native New Zealand animals, with the value of that treatment totalling more than \$610,000. The WIRF funding has helped cover the facility's operational costs.

Covid-forced restrictions and lockdowns have seen the Hospital lose income – through the cancellation of routine consultations and of a revenue-generating teaching programme with visiting American students. It has shouldered extra costs due to the pandemic, including for an extra part-time technician so it could comply with "bubble" regulations.

The facility also lost its primary sponsor just prior to the emergence of Covid-19, and has found attracting new sponsorship challenging in the context of wider economic disruption and uncertainty.

The WIRF was established last year to support wildlife institutions suffering lost revenue as a result of the Covid-19 response.

The Department's \$193,288 payment to Wildbase in July follows two earlier grants; of \$126,929 last year and \$135,500 in April this year. Wildbase is now seeking a funding partner so it can create new revenue streams and enhance its performance and reputation as a leading wildlife research facility.

## FUNDING TO HELP SAVE ALPINE SEEDS

Massey University Foundation has won crucial funding to support a project to bank the seeds from New Zealand's alpine plants. The funding of \$400,000 has come from the Lottery Grants Board.

The project will help to preserve alpine plant species threatened by climate change, which reduces alpine habitat and sees invasive plant species take over whatever suitable terrain is left.

The seeds will be stored in the New Zealand Indigenous Flora Seed Bank, which was established in 2013 and is a collaboration between Massey University, the Department of Conservation, AgResearch, Landcare Research, the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network and Rangitāne o Manawatū.

Craig McGill, Seed Bank project leader and Massey senior research officer in seed science and technology, says the \$403,182 grant from the Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund has made the project possible. "The funding has allowed us to employ the people we need, so we can build the relationships with iwi/hapu and other communities, plan our approach, and then collect and bank the seeds." "This is critical work. With climate change, many of these species have nowhere to go." About one-third of New Zealand's 600 species of alpine flora are classified as being at risk or threatened.

The seed collecting and banking is expected to begin late this year or early next year, dependent on when various species are flowering and their seeds are ready to be collected, Craig says. "We are very grateful for the Foundation's support in helping us to get this funding."

## DEMENTIA THERAPY DRAWS DONATIONS

Final-stage testing of a promising dementia therapy programme will go ahead thanks to more than \$135,000 in funding from the New Zealand Community Trust, The Lindsay Trust and private donors.

The trial of the Massey University co-developed programme will allow its benefits to be quantified before it is implemented in New Zealand and around the world.

The MinDArT initiative sees people with dementia and their supporters take part in a meditative, nature-based drawing programme using traditional drawing materials as well as digital devices. It seeks to maintain and enhance participants' fine motor skills, verbal and non-verbal communication and wellbeing.

The New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) has donated \$77,246, while donors attending a private dinner hosted by former Wellington mayor Dame Kerry Prendergast have contributed \$11,000 in funding towards the project. Their contributions follow a \$50,000 funding commitment from the Lindsay Foundation earlier this year.

NZCT National Grants Manager Ben Hodges says the trust is a big funder of community sport, but recognises that not everyone can take part in sport. "This was a good opportunity to support a programme that helps people with dementia remain "present" and connected for longer with family and friends." NZCT is impressed by MinDArT's innovative approach, use of household technology and the ease with which it can be rolled out to the wider community, he says.

Dame Kerry, who is a NZCT board member and an ambassador for Alzheimers New Zealand, says she felt moved to support MinDArT following her own family's experiences with dementia. "My father had Alzheimers and died very rapidly after diagnosis; it was a terrible to see him deteriorate. My mother had vascular dementia and died more recently."

Emma Febvre-Richards, MinDArT lead researcher and senior lecturer at Massey's College of Creative Arts, says the MinDArT team are incredibly grateful to the donors, and also for the support shown by the wider community, with many people donating their time, skills, money and goods towards the cause, Emma says.

The development of non-pharmacological dementia therapies could mean people with dementia become less dependent on medicines, which can cause side effects including dizziness and drowsiness.

The randomised control trial is expected to begin next year and will take two years to complete. It will assess the programme's benefits by comparing 64 participants – both people with dementia and their supporters – with a control group of the same number.

Almost 70,000 New Zealanders are living with dementia and that number is expected to top 170,000 by 2050.



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