

Chancellor's Welcome | Te Mihi a te Tumu Kaunihera



Dr L. John Wood

Members and friends of the University of Canterbury | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha (UC), tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, kia ora tātou katoa.

This 2018 UC Annual Report is my seventh and last since first being elected as your Chancellor in 2011. Coincidentally it marks the end of a decade of continuous leadership of our great institution at both governance and management levels, opening the way for profound change and fresh thinking. Importantly, it also provides the evidential basis for pronouncing that the challenges we set ourselves in the aftermath of the seismic events of 2010–2011 have largely all been met: not just that we stayed open and have delivered full programmes of teaching, learning and research ever since, but that our billion-dollar-plus programme to rebuild and repurpose our infrastructure and consolidate on the Ilam campus is all but complete; we have seen the resurgence in student numbers so many have worked so hard to achieve; we have made great strides in embedding the key attributes of our new graduate profile across the range of courses and programmes, with success most notably in biculturalism; we are very close to balancing the books and have every chance of being in modest surplus and debt free by the close of 2019.

In other words, our incoming new leadership need not preoccupy themselves with the problems of the past, but are free to concentrate instead on exciting new opportunities for delivering on the strategic vision that has served us so well, based on UC's renewed viability, and capacity to invest in additional resources, new programmes and new relationships.

The year 2018 began with the formal opening of the Ernest Rutherford building by the Prime Minister the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern in February. Named of course after one of the University's most illustrious alumni, the Ernest Rutherford building, a cathedral-like complex of cutting-edge laboratories at the heart of our Rutherford Regional Science and Innovation Centre, will ensure the University's national and international reputation for first-class science continues to grow and flourish. The University was privileged to host Lord Rutherford's great-granddaughter, Professor Mary Fowler, herself Master of Darwin College, Cambridge, to represent the family at the opening.

The College of Education, Health and Human Development moved to remodelled space in Rehua, the former Commerce building, on the Ilam campus in December. Delays in completing this building project have been a source of frustration but the end result will serve its new occupants and the wider University well for generations to come. The move of the College to Ilam unites the academic community of the University on one campus for the first time since the merger with the Christchurch College of Education in 2007 and will enhance opportunities for collaboration and cooperation in teaching and research.

This year has seen the University, in partnership with the University of Canterbury Students Association (UCSA), commence work on a new events centre. The new UCSA building — to be known as Haere-roa — will be a new, leaner, exciting and more fit-for-purpose building. Construction is well advanced, with opening scheduled to be within 2019. Our students have a fundraising campaign under way to close a funding gap and thus ensure that their new centre is, in line with UC tradition and very much for its own sake, majority student-owned and operated. I urge you all to join us in supporting the cause.

In parallel with these infrastructural developments, and in a number of ways more challenging, complex and important than them, the University continues to work on its new graduate profile to ensure a unique package of experiential and learning opportunities is available to our students as they move through to graduation. Historically the University required graduate profiles for all its awards but has never before adopted an institution-wide approach. The graduate profile that has now been developed and

been articulated will progressively apply to all undergraduates. Our future graduates will be critically competent in a core academic discipline of their choosing. They will be employable, innovative and enterprising, and already work-experienced. They will have had every opportunity to have become biculturally competent and confident in their personal role in a multicultural world. They will be engaged with the community. They will have been encouraged to undertake an overseas exchange and to become globally aware and connected. The leadership of the University has endorsed and resourced this work and, as has been conveyed to the Government as our principal stakeholder, is absolutely determined to succeed in it.

In 2018, the University Council awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters to Ms Jenny Harper, an alumna who has been counted among the highest echelons of the visual arts and museum sectors in Australasia for four decades. From the very beginning of her art gallery career, she made a name for herself through her deeply perceptive, critically important and popular exhibitions. Ms Harper is an academic and museum professional who has left an indelible mark not only on our city through her extraordinary performance as Director of the Christchurch Art Gallery during and after the earthquakes, but also on the New Zealand cultural and artistic stage, and beyond.

Also in 2018, Council again granted the highest awards it is able to make in recognition of the achievements of our academic staff, respectively to Professor John Harding (University Teaching Medal), Professor Rick Millane (UC Research Medal) and Professor Phil Butler (UC Innovation Medal). The awards were acknowledged as the focal point of the year's Chancellor's Dinner.

As another year of significant academic achievement for the University, 2018 saw 4,201 degrees and diplomas granted to 3,960 graduates. Of particular note is the increasing proportion of postgraduate qualifications awarded, as the University retains, and in some respects enhances, its international standing. I cannot overstate and am especially proud of UC's achievement overall with regard to its academic contribution during my time as Chancellor. As was stated in a number of the recent valedictories for the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, despite the initial post-earthquake flight of students, UC has more doctoral students, more postgraduate students,

more international students, more Māori students and more Pasifika students now than we did before the earthquakes.

I should like to take this opportunity to note the resignation of our alumna Dr Rosemary Banks from, and thank her for her service to, Council. She will be missed at the Council table, but in tribute to her professionalism, skills and experience she was presented with the larger opportunity to further serve our country as New Zealand Ambassador to the United States in Washington DC. We wish her well in this challenging appointment.

In the course of the year, Dr Rod Carr advised Council he would not be seeking reappointment as Vice-Chancellor and would step down in January 2019. I would like to acknowledge the exceptional contribution of Dr Carr to the University, its recovery and its future, and the positive impact he has had on the University, our students and staff during his tenure. As noted, there have been a number of opportunities recently to assess and pay tribute to those contributions. The consensus is that Dr Carr, while successfully running a large and complex University during the most challenging phase of its nearly 150-year history, has also contributed enormously at the local, regional and national levels in many capacities over the last 10 years. He has thoroughly earned our commensurate thanks, and we wish him and his wife Jenny all the very best for the future.

The Council met 13 times, and held nine workshops to ensure members were well-informed prior to taking significant decisions. The Finance, Planning and Resources Committee, chaired by Ms Catherine Drayton, met 10 times, providing a stream of considered advice to Council on major decisions across its spectrum of portfolio responsibilities. The Audit and Risk Committee, chaired by Mr Peter Ballantyne, met six times, closely monitored the risks faced by the University and ensured that in all aspects of its work the institution complied with its statutory and regulatory obligations. These two committees are the engine-room of Council, and in the times we face, their work places extraordinary demands on chairs and members. The Honours and Appointments Committee met four times. The Vice-Chancellor Employment Committee, enhanced in membership for the purpose of recommending to Council a successor to Dr Carr as Vice-Chancellor, was ably chaired by the Pro-Chancellor, Ms Sue McCormack.

As the result of this process, Council unanimously offered appointment as UC Vice-Chancellor to Professor Cheryl de la Rey, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pretoria, for a five-year term from February 2019. The offer was accepted. We wish Professor De la Rey a productive and enjoyable time at UC. She has exciting opportunities and challenges to lead for us, such as Kia Tōpū, our initiative to promote research and teaching in support of sustainable production, efficient processing and secure distribution within the food sector; and proposals put to government by Lincoln and Canterbury University Councils for consideration of a new form of relationship between the two institutions.

I should like to thank all Council members for their individual and collective contribution to our large, complicated and demanding institution over the past year. Since the appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor, Sue McCormack has been elected UC Chancellor until May 2021, and Council member Steve Wakefield elected Pro Chancellor until January 2020. I congratulate them both and look forward to assisting them in any way I can in their new roles.

Our University is supported in many ways and by many people — alumni, friends and benefactors. This help is an increasing part of our life blood. It is this which enables the University to offer a unique student experience, providing the tools and the opportunities that promote personal and professional growth. As a result, our graduates are then able to take up roles in the community and the wider world that allow them truly to make a difference.

As our 150th anniversary approaches in 2023, the University is seeking to establish an endowed research fund. To build this research fund, UC needs your support to ensure we can help our academics and students deliver on well-defined research goals. The fund will enable UC to take on ambitious research projects that break new ground, generate original knowledge and lead the way in innovation. This research will enhance UC's reputation globally so we continue to attract the best scholars and students now and in the future.

Let me close 2018 by expressing, on behalf of the University, its gratitude for the Government's helpful and proactive support of our UC Futures programme and, by now, its virtual completion. The Governance Oversight Group established under our

Funding Agreement with the Crown, with its independent Chair, Mr Gary Wilson, and including senior representatives of the Tertiary Education Commission, the Ministry of Education and the UC Council, has been particularly collegial and effective.

Finally, while I will continue as a member of University Council until July 2019, now that I have stepped down as Chancellor, it is fitting to express my gratitude and humility at having been granted the rare privilege of assuming a number of leadership positions over the past 10 or so years, enabling me to give something back to the institution that I have described in another context as transformative: "The University made me the man I became, and a very different person from the one I would otherwise have become. It gave me the way out I had been seeking, and a way forward. Canterbury enabled me to deliver on my potential then, and to go on developing it over the decades to come." And a special word of gratitude and love to my wife Rose, who has not only kept the show on the road, but has been with me every step of the way.

The developments I have discussed, building as they do on the University of Canterbury's very special holistic learning experience, will ensure that each year our graduates are more and more ready to connect and contribute effectively, reaching out from their own communities to the world. As we conclude a year that has turned out to be pivotal, and a harbinger of change, it is timely to pause and acknowledge the very significant progress that has again been made by UC in realising our programmes in response to the events of 2010–2011. That progress is why we can now put the intervening time behind us and instead look forward to our 150th anniversary in 2023 with such great confidence.



Dr L. John Wood
Chancellor | Tumu Kaunihera 2018