

# Chancellor's Welcome



Dr John Wood

**2014 marked the close of one of the most significant chapters in the history of the University. At year's end, UC had put behind it the post-earthquake period of uncertainty, stabilisation and planning, and was looking forward to a period of heightened activity, consolidation of progress so far, and delivery on the opportunities for the future.**

Our most important achievement was, through a series of negotiated outcomes, to regain control of our destiny. The impact on the state of our people and institution has been universally positive. The challenges, which up to now have seemed daunting, offer tantalising glimpses of the new University of Canterbury we have worked so hard to conceive.

Since the events of 2010–2011, the imperatives for the University have been the rebuilding of student numbers and a return to financial viability, and to plan for and implement the transformational opportunities the earthquakes created.

2014 saw the achievement of two key milestones along that path. Receipt of the first \$100 million of the Government's UC Futures funding of up to \$260 million new investment in the University was acknowledged through the visit of the Prime Minister, the Rt. Honourable John Key, the Minister for Tertiary Education, the Honourable Steven Joyce, the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake

Recovery, the Honorable Gerry Brownlee, and Ministers Amy Adams and Nicky Wagner in September. The second milestone was the settlement, for \$550 million, of the University's earthquake-related insurance claims.

Individually, these two achievements were both sizeable and significant. Taken together they are game-changing. The combined extraordinary capital will be invested in the provision of world-class facilities for students. Resolution of the insurance claim, in particular, allows the University's extensive campus transformation capital works programme to proceed with greater clarity and autonomy than before.

UC Futures represents the Government's investment in the redevelopment of our College of Engineering, in a project known as Canterbury Engineering the Future (CETF), and building of the Rutherford Science and Innovation Centre (RSIC).

The main contract for the \$143 million CETF project was let to Hawkins Construction in late 2014. The project, scheduled to be completed by the start of the 2017 academic year, requires the substantial redevelopment of more than 40,000sqm of space making up the Engineering Precinct. It will ensure the University remains at the forefront of engineering research and teaching well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will create new laboratories for chemical and process engineering and structural engineering, along with modernised laboratories for civil, mechanical and electrical engineering, and a new social learning space for 1500 students.

The \$213 million RSIC project — named for the University's most distinguished alumnus — will be a new building, creating state-of-the-art teaching and research laboratories for physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology and geology. The University Council expects to progress a contract for this project early in 2015.

UC's largely insurance-funded capital works programme continued to progress rapidly during 2014. The UC Council marked the completion of significant remediation works through the renaming of several UC buildings, acknowledging the University's historical and cultural connections with key partners and distinguished alumni.

The building once known as Registry, and now repurposed, was renamed Matariki, and the James Hight building is now known as Puaka-James Hight.

The name Matariki is a taonga, a treasure gifted to UC by our partners Ngāi Tahu. Matariki is one of seven brilliant stars in the constellation known as Pleiades. The name signifies a new beginning for us all.

The Puaka-James Hight Central Library continues to commemorate Sir James Hight, one of the greatest contributors to UC's academic and institutional development. In addition, it is named after the brightest star in the constellation Orion, which rises at about the same time as Matariki.

These new names reflect the growing strength of UC's relationship with Ngāi Tahu and the mana of Te Ao Māori at the heart of UC's campus.

In recognition of the long-standing and rewarding partnership between UC and Tait Communications, the Butterfly building was renamed after Tait founder, UC alumnus and electronics pioneer Sir Angus Tait. The building was formally re-opened by Communications and Information Technology Minister Amy Adams, in the presence of members of Sir Angus's family.

The University's History building was renamed in recognition of one of UC's most influential academics, Sir Karl Popper (1902–1994). Sir Karl taught at UC from 1937 to 1944 and is regarded as one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's leading philosophers.

Of course, a university is not just about buildings which, after all, are simply a means to the ends they serve. At UC, the overriding concern has always been and remains people — our staff and, above all, our students.

In 2014, UC staff continued to gain international and national acclaim for the quality of their research and teaching.

The status and title of Distinguished Professor is reserved for UC staff who have demonstrated world-class academic leadership and achievements of the highest international standing. In 2014, Professors Mike Steel (Mathematics and Statistics), Niki Davis (Educational Studies and Leadership) and Jack Copeland (Humanities and Creative

Arts) were promoted to join Distinguished Professor Geoff Chase (Mechanical Engineering) to bring to four the total number recognised at this highest professorial rank.

Every year, the UC Council highlights the quality of staff at the University through the awarding of its annual teaching, research and innovation medals, the highest honours it can bestow. In 2014, Professor C. Michael Hall (Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship), a leading international sustainability and tourism researcher, and Professor Mike Steel (Mathematics and Statistics), an expert in the science of reconstructing evolutionary trees and networks from genetic data, each received a UC Research Medal. Leading New Zealand communication disorders researcher Associate Professor Maggie-Lee Huckabee was awarded the UC Innovation Medal. Associate Professor Paul Ballantine (Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship) received the Teaching Medal in recognition of his outstanding achievements in marketing and his contribution to UC as a lecturer, supervisor and head of department.

In 2014, the University Council awarded four honorary doctorates. Academy award-winning filmmaker Vincent Ward (Doctor of Fine Arts), corporate magnate Alan Gibbs (Doctor of Engineering) and Christchurch property investor and entrepreneur Antony Gough (Doctor of Commerce) received their honorary doctorates in April.

Mr Gough has made a significant contribution to the development of Christchurch's central city. He graduated from UC in 1970 with a BSc(Hons) in nuclear physics.

Mr Ward is one of New Zealand's most celebrated filmmakers, screenwriters and artists. His films began receiving international recognition and critical acclaim before he graduated from UC in 1979 with a Diploma in Fine Arts.

Mr Gibbs has had a substantial influence across New Zealand's business, economic, political and cultural spheres since graduating from UC in 1961 with a BA in economics, having previously studied for three years towards an engineering degree.

Christchurch retailer and UC graduate Richard Ballantyne received an Honorary Doctor of Commerce degree before Christmas. He was invested as a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to business and the community in March 2014.

UC students continued to excel. Among many highlights, UC student — and product of my own former high school at Lincoln — Hadleigh Frost, was the fifth UC student in a row to earn a Rhodes Scholarship. UC students won 10 of the 26 Fulbright scholarships in 2014, more than any other New Zealand university.

During the year I had the honour of being re-elected Chancellor of the University Council, a position I have held since 2011. Sue McCormack was re-elected Pro-Chancellor.

I also had the privilege of leading a UC delegation to the United States on a successful appeal to US-based alumni and supporters. The interest and support of the welfare of the University from so far away was humbling and inspiring. In 2014, we achieved a record level of philanthropic support. The University of Canterbury New Zealand Trust and University of Canterbury Foundation funds rose to record levels in excess of \$120 million as at 31 December 2014. The income from these funds has supported thousands of students through scholarships, and hundreds of staff through research and travel grants.

The generosity of our alumni and other supporters reflects the valued contribution UC has made in Christchurch, in Canterbury, nationally and internationally throughout its history. It is also a clear acknowledgement of the vital role UC has in the future success of the wider Canterbury region, to which it continues to contribute through world-class teaching and research — of most recent note in the seismic and earthquake engineering domains, but in many other areas as well.

In 2014, the University awarded 3926 qualifications to 3600 people. Since the September 2010 earthquake (to 10 February 2015), the University has awarded 18,718 qualifications to 15,889 people.

The University Council and its key committees were particularly active during 2014. The Council met 14 times — for the first time on record in every month of the year — and held

11 workshops. I would like to thank Council members for their hard work during a year which has seen larger, more complex and more difficult challenges, and therefore decisions to take, than at any time in the University's history. Our two main committee chairs, in particular — of Finance, Planning and Resources, and Audit and Risk — have achieved a phenomenal amount of work throughout 2014, assessing advice to Council, holding workshops and special meetings, and finally joining me as UC members of the TEC Minister's Governance Oversight Group for the UC Futures programme.

It is noteworthy that Council has, throughout 2014, sought and achieved consensus on all the big issues before it. That united voice has been particularly helpful to the University in dealing with our stakeholders and interested parties, and is a tribute to the entire Council membership.

A challenge for 2015 will be the gazetting and implementation of the Council's new constitution.

I began by saying that, to my mind, the most significant achievement in 2014 was squarely to put the destiny of the University back in its own hands. The efforts of the Council have been no small part of that outcome, alongside the work of so many others — staff, students, alumni, other stakeholders and the community.

Buoyed by the success of 2014 and sustained by the collegiality which has underpinned it, we look forward to writing the 2015 chapter, and future chapters, with excitement and in anticipation of what this fine University will become.



**Dr John Wood**  
Chancellor