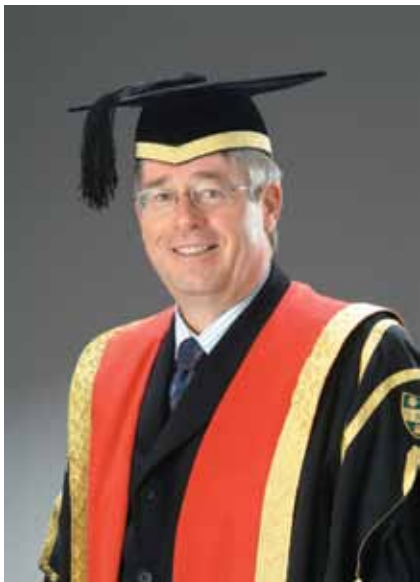




# VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COMMENTARY



Looking back over the year, I am immensely proud of the scope of Victoria's achievements in 2010. Our continuing focus on our strategic priorities has led to success in a wide range of areas. This report outlines our priorities and highlights for 2010 and the ways we achieved our objectives.

## RESEARCH SUCCESS

Victoria University continues to strengthen its reputation as a research-intensive university of international renown. This has been demonstrated by the \$21 million growth in the value of external research contracts held by Victoria.

Successes include the 15 Marsden grants received by Victoria researchers, equating to 14 percent of total funding available. Projects will look at areas as diverse as opportunities for New Zealand wool and wireless technologies, the effect of aid on Pacific Island states and how trivial images can create immediate illusions of memories.

I was proud to see success right across the University, including two faculties represented for the first time—the Faculty of Architecture and Design, and the Faculty of Education. Another highlight was seeing Victoria Professor Sir Paul Callaghan receive this year's largest Marsden grant for his research on nuclear magnetic resonance and nanotechnology. Professor Callaghan's research was also recognised with a sizeable grant from the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) and his Magnetic Resonance Innovation Team was awarded the 2010 Prime Minister's Science Prize.

One of the University's commitments to the Treaty of Waitangi is Māori research excellence with the potential for significant social, economic and scholarly impacts. We have made significant gains in this area, as exemplified in our 'Research' section.

A key aspect of being a research-intensive university is working to increase our number of postgraduate students. During the past five years, the number of postgraduate students at Victoria has increased more than 50 percent. We are continuing this focus by offering an increasing number of scholarships to outstanding school leavers and PhD applicants.

## STAFF AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Many of our staff and students reached impressive heights in 2010, both internationally and closer to home. This report lists just some of those achievements.

Once again, Professor Sir Paul Callaghan deserves special mention for his leadership of the Magnetic Resonance Team that won the 2010 Prime Minister's Prize, worth \$500,000. This prize is awarded for a transformative science discovery or achievement which has had an impact in New Zealand or internationally.

Another project that is boosting our international profile is student-led. A team from the School of Architecture at Victoria University is one of only 20 teams



worldwide—and the first entry ever from the Southern Hemisphere—to be selected to compete in the prestigious US Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2011. The team will design and build a Kiwi bach using sustainable technology for the competition at the National Mall's West Pontomac Park in Washington DC in September 2011.

The Victoria University of Wellington Debating Society also had a stellar year. The team has an outstanding track record, but this year did particularly well. Their biggest success was winning the Australasian Debating Championships (Australas), the world's second biggest debating tournament against around 300 competitors.

## EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Victoria's distinct advantage of being based in the capital city means we enjoy close connections with government organisations as well as the private sector. Our relationships with external partners are a major strength of the University, and we continue to build mutually beneficial partnerships. At the end of June, we formally celebrated our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Capital & Coast District Health Board, and launched our jointly offered Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Research.

I also had the honour of hosting China's Vice President His Excellency Xi Jinping, who officially launched the Confucius Institute at Victoria. The Institute is part of an international network of more than 300, which teaches Chinese language and provides an enhanced understanding of Chinese culture.

This year, we signed a letter of agreement with the Wellington Police, formalising our common goal of keeping Victoria a safe community for students and staff. This move has been supported by students, with VUWSA taking an active role in the formation of the agreement.

We also extended our links with various international universities, by signing agreements to establish joint programmes, collaborative opportunities for Victoria staff and exchange and research opportunities for students.

## SUPPORT OF ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

With the increasing constraints on government funding, the support of Victoria alumni, professional bodies and public and private sector organisations ensures that the University can continue to attract staff of international standing, reward top students through valuable scholarships and prizes and provide facilities to help deliver quality research and teaching programmes. We are very grateful to our friends for this ongoing and growing support.

Of particular note in 2010 was the establishment of the James Bertram Scholarships through the Victoria University Foundation. These were set up to foster understanding and build relationships between China and New Zealand. Two students will study at Victoria for a year, and then have six months language tuition in Beijing before embarking on a year's study at Peking University. They will graduate with a double Master's in International Relations and Public Policy from Victoria and Peking Universities respectively.

We also saw a welcome rise in the number of donors who have notified us of their intention to leave a bequest to the University, and who have joined the Victoria University Foundation's Legacy Club. We appreciate very much this mounting private and public sector support for Victoria and pride ourselves on ensuring that every donor's experience in helping support the University is an extremely positive one.

Likewise, we pride ourselves on maintaining links with our alumni and providing positive experiences for them. We try to keep in touch in various ways, including holding alumni events both nationally and internationally. As well as alumni events in Wellington and Auckland, in 2010 we hosted events in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing, Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, New York, London and Berlin.

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

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As Chancellor Ian McKinnon has noted, we are operating in a capped funding environment, which requires a shift in thinking. With restricted student numbers our emphasis is now increasingly on quality, and we have measures in place to attract the best and brightest students to Victoria.

We must also ensure that our student population remains diverse. Equity issues featured highly in the Government's Tertiary Education Strategy, released in February, with goals including ensuring Māori and Pacific students achieve at higher levels. The University is already working on this goal through its Equity and Diversity Strategy, developed last year. In 2010, Luamanuvao Winnie Laban was appointed to the newly established position of Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika), to lead initiatives to lift the performance of our Pacific students. We are delighted to have her on board, and look forward to reporting on gains in this area.

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) released its inaugural Education Performance Indicators this year which gratifyingly showed that New Zealand universities are all providing a consistently high level of educational outcomes.

Universities New Zealand also commissioned a report by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) to look at the economic value of university investment. The report showed that, consistent with our long-held view, government investment in New Zealand's universities provides a significant permanent boost to Gross Domestic Product.

## LOOKING FORWARD

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Government and taxpayers have high expectations of a return on their investment in university education, and rightly so. The challenge for Victoria is how best to manage the changing environment, while maintaining our focus on providing a high-quality education for our students.

We need to continue to clearly demonstrate our quality and contribution to society while celebrating our achievements. Victoria is committed to a high-performance culture with no tolerance for mediocrity in any of our spheres of activity. This Annual Report demonstrates this well, and I'm sure that 2011 will bring even more success.

**Professor Pat Walsh**



Vice-Chancellor