

Integro

January 2009 | Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences alumni newsletter

Integro (in-té-gro) n. latin: meaning to heal, refresh; to make whole; to renew.

Launch of National Eye Centre

The first national research centre focusing on eye health and vision was launched at the University in July, pulling together research across both FMHS and the Faculty of Science.



Dignitaries at the NEC opening: (From left) Mr Geoff Sargent, President NZ Association of Optometrists; Professor Hugh Taylor, School of Population Health Melbourne; Professor Michael Kalloniatis, Department of Optometry and Vision Science (DOVS); Professor Charles McGhee, Department of Ophthalmology; Dr Iain Dunlop, President Royal Australia and NZ College of Ophthalmologists, Professor Stuart McCutcheon, Vice-Chancellor and Professor Paul Donaldson, DOVS

The New Zealand National Eye Centre (NZ-NEC) will bring together clinicians from throughout New Zealand and scientists in the fields of ophthalmology, optometry, eye health and vision science.

“The establishment of the National Eye Centre is the culmination of more than eight years of collaboration and planning by researchers at the University,” says Professor Charles McGhee, Director of the Centre and Head of the Department of Ophthalmology. “By combining the resources of all the research programmes in the area, we have increased capability to answer questions of importance to the eye health of New Zealanders and worldwide.”

Research programmes currently underway at the Centre include developing treatments for eye disease, including cataract, glaucoma, keratoconus and retinal disease; new approaches to eye surgery and wound healing; understanding the mechanisms of human vision and how this can be affected; and developing new technologies for the treatment of vision defects.

The Centre builds a local framework for collaborative funding applications to expand existing research programmes, including translation of laboratory science to clinical application, to better address the needs of

New Zealand and global eye health. The combined clinical resources will expand the scope of clinical research and promote cross disciplinary research, with the NZ-NEC becoming a national centre for clinical trials related to eye and vision care and the centre for the assessment of rare ocular disease in New Zealand. It will also provide an enhanced environment for teaching and training of undergraduate students, postgraduate researchers and professional education programmes.

“Over 100,000 people suffer from visual impairment and blindness in New Zealand, with most conditions causing vision loss being preventable or treatable,” says Professor Michael Kalloniatis of the Department of Optometry and Deputy Director of the Centre. “Visual impairment will increase as the population ages, and is predicted to double by 2024. The research at the National Eye Centre will take a comprehensive view of the eye, combining basic science and clinical knowledge, to address these problems and also provide cutting-edge training and education to the ophthalmic professions.”

The Centre will host over 100 staff in fourteen research teams from the University’s Department of Ophthalmology in the Faculty of Medical and Health Science and the Department of Optometry in the Faculty of Science, with the vision to eliminate preventable blindness and reduce visual impairment in New Zealand’s multicultural and aging population.

In this issue

- 2 Note from the Dean
Farewell David Cole



- 3 Health research funding

- 4 Faculty news



- 5 Research news



- 6 Student news



- 7 Visitors to the Faculty



- 7 People News



Date to note:

**Neurological Open Day
Saturday 21 March 2009**

From the Dean



The latest year has confirmed again, plagiarising slightly the famous Chinese curse, that indeed we do live in interesting times.

Numbers of domestic medical students we can train in New Zealand has long been a contentious issue and in election year we expected it would reappear. Hoping for a lift in the numbers, we were more than surprised when both major parties took into the election an undertaking to boost the number of doctors being trained in New Zealand by 200 (currently we are capped at 155 domestic medical students into Year 2 while Otago are capped at 210).

Stepping up numbers of doctors in training is not straightforward with capacity issues needing to be worked around at every stage of the pipeline. The reality is that we will not be able to fully take up our share of these new places without significant redevelopment work at the Grafton Campus. As you will be aware, some of this work has already started, while the increases proposed by the new government considerably aid our case for the wider redevelopment of the campus.

Uncertain economic outlooks have generated something of a flight to education, producing double digit increases in applications for all our undergraduate programmes for 2009. Our Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Pharmacy applications are both up by more than 25% over 2007 applications, reflecting the growing regard in the health sector for graduates from these quality courses.

The University of Auckland has again been ranked as the top University in New Zealand in the global university rankings published in 2008 by The Times Higher Education and in the top 1% of universities internationally. I was again delighted to note that the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences was ranked 42nd among the world's top Life Sciences and Biomedicine universities, a ranking that shows that we are still punching well above our weight when you consider the institutions rated above us.

Establishing the National Eye Centre at the Grafton Campus (see feature article) was among the highlights of our research last year. The setting up of large thematic research networks – in 2008 we started the Auckland Cancer Research Network plus the Auckland Nutrition Network – has increased the scope and opportunity for collaborative research with tertiary institutions and DHBs in the wider region. We look forward to continuing these endeavours in 2009.

If there is one downside to these growing research thrusts it remains the difficulties inherent in the funding system. In 2008, Deputy Dean Professor Ian Reid produced a paper revealing the disproportionate level of health research funding provided by the New Zealand government (see article). This lack of investment risks sizeable numbers of our highly trained research workforce being forced offshore.

This is hardly the outcome envisaged by former Dean David Cole when, over a decade and a half, he shaped the faculty into the research leader it is known as today. We hope to salute David's paternal role across the faculty at an event this year, and without doubt David's passing (see article) was one of the year's genuine low points.

I very much look forward to the 'interesting times' continuing in the years ahead and I wish each and every member of our alumni a rewarding and most enjoyable year in 2009.



PROFESSOR IAIN MARTIN

Farewell David Cole

In September, David Cole, the second Dean of the University's then School of Medicine, passed away.

David Cole attained his BMedSc and MB ChB from Otago University through the 1940s, and prior to his association with The University of Auckland, had established a reputation as an eminent, highly capable cardio-thoracic surgeon based at Greenlane Hospital.

Through 1967-8 with the Auckland Medical School moving from dream to reality, David Cole was among the first appointed to the new school's teaching staff, and over the next few years took up the role of Associate Dean of Graduate Studies before being named as Deputy Dean. In 1974, when Dean Professor Cecil Lewis stepped down just as the first class were to graduate from the Auckland Medical School, David Cole was appointed as Dean, a role he held for a remarkable 15 years.



Under David Cole's guidance and management, the Auckland Medical School flourished. In 1976 the school's intake was doubled to 120 students on the strength of a very positive report from the General Medical Council of the UK, and two years later, academic units were established at Greenlane and Middlemore Hospitals. Professor Cole (he held a personal chair in surgery) was instrumental through his deanship in developing the research core and culture that underpins today's Faculty, and played a major role in galvanising support for teaching and research activities from the wider community. Much of the quality art collection the faculty houses was secured under David Cole's direction.

Professor David Cole retired as Dean at the start of 1989, his place being taken by his brother-in-law Professor Derek North. Through his time as Dean it was not unusual to see him emerge from his office in his white coat and head across to the Auckland Hospital where he maintained his clinical activities as a thoracic surgeon, then witness him dashing back to a teaching class in the same coat.

Professor Cole maintained close contact with the medical school, being honoured as an Emeritus Professor while he and his wife Margo have been regular and interested participants at every alumni event they could make.

In the 15 years David Cole headed the medical school, he took it from a fledgling medical training establishment to something much closer to the multi-disciplinary teaching and research-based Faculty we know today. This was very much the maturation period for medical training in Auckland, and the Faculty, University and medical community in Auckland will long be in the debt of Professor David Cole.

New Zealand lags in health research funding

Health research funding in New Zealand is 12 times less than some OECD countries, and may soon affect the health of the population.

A report by FMHS Deputy Dean Professor Ian Reid, with Deputy Dean of Otago Medical School Professor Peter Joyce, shows funding provided by the New Zealand government for health research is currently equivalent to \$10.2 per capita. In comparison, funding in Australia is around \$34.6 per capita, with \$54.3 per capita in the UK and \$126 per capita in the USA.

In New Zealand, medical research is primarily funded through the Health Research Council, which invested \$63 million in this year's funding round.

This funding has remained at a static level for the past four years despite research costs rising by almost 9% per year. Around 85% of submitted projects do not receive funding.

The report, entitled Health Research: A critical investment for New Zealand, has been presented to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Research Science and Technology.

	HRC New Zealand	NHMRC Australia	MRC, NHS United Kingdom	NIH United States
Funding per annum	NZ\$42m*	AU\$636m*	£1256m*	US\$28.6b
Funding per capita	NZ\$10.2	NZ\$34.6	NZ\$54.3	NZ\$126

*Excluding overheads

Government provides \$90 million for research

The University of Auckland received close to \$90 million for research in annual government-funded grant rounds this year.

The University received \$50 million from the Foundation for Science, Research and Technology, \$10.4 million from the Marsden Fund, and \$29 million from the Health Research of New Zealand, to fund research over the next three years.

In the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, Foundation funding was allocated to Associate Professors Cris Print for development of colon cancer diagnostic testing, Phil Crosier for fast tracking of drugs, and Larry Chamley for research into pregnancy disorders, specifically those involving trophoblasts.

In the Marsden funding round, grants were received in FMHS by Dr Thomas Proft for a project looking at Streptococcus virulence factors, for rebuilding the cornea using cell transplantation by Dr Dipika Patel, to use blood stem cells to treat Type 1 diabetes by Associate Professor Geoffrey Krissansen, and by Associate Professor Christian Soeller for a project to better understanding signal transduction.

HRC funding was awarded to nine projects and five research programmes across the University, including FMHS research into heart molecular structure and function, neurodegenerative diseases, cancer targeting, metabolic pathways involved in diabetes, infectious disease, and prevention and intervention of cardiovascular disease and depression. Three emerging FMHS researchers received HRC First Grants – Drs Marie-Louise Ward, Susannah Sullivan and Daniel Exeter.



Professor Bill Denny

\$10 million for Pathway science

Science developed at FMHS has been used to create a new company, raising \$10 million in its first financing round.

Pathway Therapeutics will use research from the labs of Professors Bill Denny and Peter Shepherd to develop new cancer drugs. These will be based on inhibitors of PI3 kinase, an enzyme involved in controlling cell growth and migration, and of particular interest as a potential cancer therapeutic target.

The new funding will be used to develop Pathway's intellectual property portfolio, hire research staff and take potential anticancer therapeutics through to preclinical and clinical trials. The company was spun-out of the University by Auckland UniServices, and the finance was raised through a syndicate jointly led by CM Capital Investments and GBS Venture Partners, Australia.

Faculty news

Award for mental health group

A team of researchers and clinicians at FMHS and Auckland DHB have been recognised for their work in the development and delivery of psychological strategies for positive symptoms of psychosis.

Despite improvements in pharmacotherapy, and changes in service delivery models, a number of service users in both inpatient and community mental health services remain distressed by medication-resistant positive psychotic symptoms such as auditory hallucinations and delusions. People experiencing these symptoms often feel isolated, with poor social functioning and quality of life, and experience higher levels of anxiety, depression and suicide than the general population.

In 2004, a consumer-clinician alliance was developed to co-facilitate the group intervention. The team, including Helen Hamer and Debra Lampshire from the School of Nursing and colleagues Dr Patte Randal and Nurse Specialist Janette Symes at Auckland mental health services, has developed both the Hearing Voices and Distressing Beliefs Groups at Auckland DHB.

NZMA Debate

Less than a fortnight before the election the faculty hosted a Medical Political Debate featuring the health spokespeople from the main political parties. Organised by the Auckland Council of the NZMA, the debate featured a panel of local doctors posing questions to the politician bench which included David Cunliffe, Tony Ryall, and Sue Kedgley.

The questions gave the politicians little room to finger point and their responses were examined by an audience that clearly wanted to see change and improvement at the top of each party's health agenda. Key topics covered in the debate included thinking around the funding of primary care, workforce issues, skill sets on DHB boards and advisory committees, the role of Pharmac (for which there was general support) and accountabilities of DHB boards in light of the ADHB's laboratory contract saga.



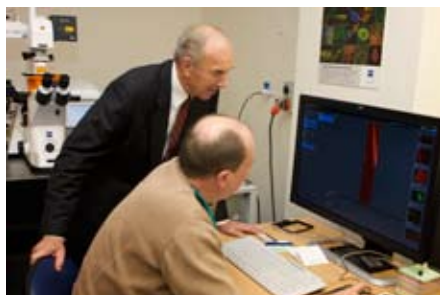
From left: Dr Patte Randal, Janette Symes, Dr Janice Wilson (Deputy director General, Ministry of Health), Debra Lampshire and Helen Hamer

Since the launch of the project the team has facilitated 24 groups, trained 150 clinicians in the techniques, and coached three clinicians and one service user to co-facilitate similar groups. Participants have an average of 15 to 20 years voice-hearing experience, and after attending the group reported a 30-70% reduction in frequency and distress of voice hearing over eight sessions.

The silver achievement award was presented to the team by Dr Janice Wilson, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Health, at the Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Services Conference (TheMHS).



Dr John Mathews, former chair of the School of Medicine Foundation, views the new confocal microscope with the key personnel from the faculty's Biomedical Imaging Research Unit



State-of-the-art Confocal microscope secured

Researchers at the faculty have been quick to take advantage of one of the most up to date confocal microscopes in the Southern Hemisphere following the installation and commissioning of the unit in mid-2008. The Biomedical Imaging Research Unit's new Zeiss LSM 710 confocal microscope provides a huge step forward in technology and sensitivity, allowing a very stable platform for intervention, perfusion and precise measurement of intracellular signalling events such as calcium with high temporal and spatial resolution.

This microscope was purchased with significant funding support provided by the School of Medicine Foundation.

Research news

Family violence has impact on pregnancy

Research from FMHS shows that partner violence is linked with smoking during pregnancy, miscarriages and abortion.

Published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and funded by the HRC, the research showed that almost 10% of ever-pregnant women experienced violence during pregnancy, with most experiencing the same, or worse, level of violence during pregnancy as before, from the same person (usually the father of the child).

The research also showed that women who experienced violence during pregnancy were more likely to smoke tobacco while pregnant than those who had not experienced violence, and violence was associated with both women and their partners being less likely to want the pregnancy.

Dr Janet Fanslow, the lead investigator, says the findings reinforce the need for the current Ministry of Health programme of action on responding to family violence.

A second study showed almost one in three women report having at least one miscarriage, and one in ten women have terminated a pregnancy. Asian women are 3.5 times more likely to have an abortion than Pakeha women.

Toddler milk to reduce infection

Toddlers in Auckland will be offered a supplemented milk drink as part of a study that aims to reduce serious infection and improve child learning.

The research, undertaken in association with Tamaki Healthcare, will provide parents of children aged 12 to 18 months with nutrition advice and a milk drink containing vitamins and minerals. The health and learning ability of the children will be monitored. This project will lead to a larger trial which will show if improving nutrition of children can increase their learning ability and reduce serious infections, such as pneumonia and gastroenteritis.

Infections such as pneumonia and gastroenteritis kill millions of children worldwide each year, and children with poor nutrition are more likely to contract these diseases. In New Zealand, these diseases are common in young children, particularly those with poor nutrition.



From the left: Associate Professor Cameron Grant, Dr Clare Wall and Lorraine Hetaraka-Stevens from Tamaki Healthcare

New drug for kidney tumours

Scientists at The University of Auckland and Stanford University School of Medicine, have been working together to develop a new approach to targeting kidney cancer.

Stanford researchers have identified a small molecule which kills cells where autophagy (cell recycling) is not functioning correctly. Building on this, Dr Michael Hay in the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre has designed related molecules which retain the cancer-selective properties but have characteristics more suitable for potential use as a human drug.

Teacher's smoking habits studied

Teachers around New Zealand are being asked about their attitudes towards smokefree issues, including the Smokefree Environments Amendment Act (2003) when all New Zealand schools and early childcare centres went totally smokefree.

Researchers are asking 2,000 teachers, randomly selected from the electoral roll, to complete a questionnaire for the Teachers Say About Smokefree study. The study will address questions about whether teachers regard themselves as role models for their pupils, their smoking habits during the work week and at weekends, and if and how the Smokefree Environments Amendment Act impacted on their lives. The results will be used to assess teachers' needs and guide government smokefree policy.

Auckland participants wanted for polypill trial

A new trial looking at a single pill to prevent cardiovascular disease is starting in New Zealand.

The PILL pilot trial, led by the Clinical Trials Research Unit of The University of Auckland, is testing a "polypill" – a single pill which combines four drugs that each reduce cardiovascular risk factors. The trial will include 400 people from New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, India, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA.

The 12 week trial will assess tolerability of the pill and effects on blood pressure and cholesterol. The study is looking for volunteers who are not currently on associated medication. Volunteers who can attend a trial clinic in Auckland can self-refer via the website www.pillproject.org

Student news

Student research competition

The second annual HealthX competition showcasing the research activity undertaken by students in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences was staged at the faculty in mid-September with the support of the Auckland Medical Research Foundation who provided the major prize for the prestigious event.

The overall winner, and first place in the Roche Biomedical Oral Presentation category, was Joanne Davidson, for her research on connexion channels in hypoxic-ischemic brain injury, supervised by Professor Alistair Gunn and Associate Professor Laura Bennet. Second place in the Biomedical category was awarded to Amy Smith, supervised by Professor Mike Dragunow, for research into amyloid plaques in Alzheimer's disease.



Bruce Cole, Chairman of the Auckland Medical Research Foundation, presenting the top prize at HealthX '08 to Joanne Davidson

In the Population Health Oral Presentation group, first place was awarded to Paul Drury, supervised by Associate Professor Laura Bennet and Professor Alistair Gunn, for his research into oxygenation and EEG abnormalities during the arterial switch operation. Second place went to Sarah Abraham, supervised by Associate Professor

Paul Hofman and Professor Wayne Cutfield, for her work into the effects of prematurity on glucose metabolism and body composition.

Deborah Blunt was awarded first place in the Clinical Oral Presentation category for her research into iron deficiency risk factors in children, supervised by Dr Cameron Grant. Second place was awarded to Manisha Cooray, supervised by Dr Catherina Chang, for work into a randomised study on asthma medications.

In the Poster Presentation group, David Phillips, supervised by Professor Colin Green and Associate Professor Louise Nicholson was awarded first place for his work on the neural potential of limbal stem cell. Ricky Wan was awarded second place for his work on the effects of BZP, supervised by Professor Rob Kydd and Dr Bruce Russell

HealthX '08 incorporated 39 Poster presentations along with 47 Oral Presentations. The competition was sponsored by the Auckland Medical Research Foundation, Maurice and Phyllis Paykel Trust, Auckland UniServices, Roche, Invitrogen, GE Healthcare Life Sciences, Coherent Scientific and Auckland District Health Board.



The organising committee of the successful student health research conference

Fiji Village Project continues

The faculty continues to support the Fiji Village Project, an initiative which sees medical students from The University of Auckland, University of Otago, Fiji School of Medicine and Australian National University spending their own time in villages in Fiji assisting with water tank installation and health screening for locals. In the first year of the project, students worked with Nabukavesi Village (population ~600) installing three water tanks and this summer plans were to return to Nabukavesi and then begin work with the neighboring Qilai Village.



Surgical students win awards

Anubhav Mittal, a PhD student in the Department of Surgery, has been awarded the Louis Barnett Prize for his research in haemorrhagic shock by the New Zealand chapter of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. The Prize includes a cash reward of \$2500.

Anubhav and fellow PhD student Benjamin Loveday were also joint recipients of the Young Investigator Award presented at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Surgical Research Society of Australasia. Each were awarded a \$1500 travel grant with their prize.

Visitors to the Faculty

Anne Young



In October, the Freemasons Roskill Foundation in conjunction with the faculty, bought leading US neurologist Professor Anne Young to New Zealand for speaking engagements in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin. Professor Young has headed the Department of Neurology at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital and is the Julieanne Dorn Professor of Neurology at the Harvard Medical School.

Professor Young leads a department with nearly 300 physicians, scientists, and staff, plus 36 young doctors in residency training. The neurology service has 60 regular hospital beds and a 17-bed neurology intensive care unit, and last year cared for 20,000 outpatients. Annual funding for Dr Young's research stands at \$18 million.

In conjunction with Professor Richard Faull, Professor Young discussed "Recent Advances in Huntington's Disease and Parkinson's Disease" with big audiences in each venue. Professor Young also spent time with clinicians during her visit, particularly at the ADHB where she spoke in conjunction with the Neurological Foundation Professor of Clinical Neurology, Alan Barber.

Professor Grace Ma



Professor Grace Ma is a tenured full Professor in the Department of Public Health and Director of Centre for Asian Health, College of Health Professions at Temple University. She is also the President of Asian Community Cancer Coalition and Asian Health Foundation, USA.

Professor Ma visited FMHS in September, as a keynote speaker at the 2008 Third International Asian Health and Wellbeing Conference, which took place at School of Population Health. Her speech mainly focused on a successful model of community-based participatory research that has yielded not only important epidemiologic data on a large subset of Asian communities in the United States, but also has significant impact on behavioural changes in the culturally and linguistically diverse Asian immigrant communities in the United States.

During her visit, Professor Ma also gave a public lecture at Fickling Centre, Three Kings, Auckland. Her lecture and visit was sponsored by the Eve Seelye Charitable Trust Fund, and there were more than 80 community members listening to her experiences in working with Asian immigrants in the USA

Professor Randolph Menzel

Professor Randolph Menzel, an international expert in neurobiology, visited the Department of Anaesthesiology for three weeks as an associate investigator on a Marsden funded project entitled 'Does Anaesthesia Steal Time' (Pls Guy Warman and Jamie Sleight).

Professor Menzel is best known for his work on the honey bee brain, and learning and memory in bees.

Bees are quite remarkable in their ability to learn and remember. They can accurately tell the time of the day even in the darkness of the hive, they can count, and can be trained to recognize patterns and odors in both the lab and the field.

The main focus of the Marsden project is to investigate the effect of general anaesthesia on time perception and whether any lack of time perception during anaesthesia is due to amnesia or the circadian clock being stopped.

Professor Menzel's visit has fostered a strong new link between Auckland and Berlin and will help develop new research techniques and skills at FMHS.

People News

Royal Society awards for medical researchers

Two Faculty of Medical and Health Science staff have been honoured with awards from the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Dr Maurice Curtis of the Department of Anatomy and Radiology has been awarded the 2008 Hamilton Memorial Prize, an annual award recognising early career researchers. Dr Curtis received the award for his research into the human brain, including a landmark Science paper describing the pathway taken by new brain cells from the site of neurogenesis to other places in the brain. This finding has major implications in understanding the human brain and developing treatments for neurological disease.



Dr Maurice Curtis

The inaugural Dame Joan Metge Medal in Social Sciences has been awarded to Professor Diana Lennon of the School of Medicine for mentoring new researchers and building relationships with study participants in the field of paediatric disease. The Metge Medal is awarded for excellence in research and contributing to capacity building and new knowledge.



Neville Jordan, President of the Royal Society of New Zealand, Professor Diana Lennon and Dame Joan Metge

Postdoctoral Fellow in bone research

Jessica Costa of the School of Medicine received a Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Foundation of Research Science and Technology to further her scientific research into the potential for compounds in milk as dietary supplements and nutraceuticals. She will concentrate on newly-discovered adipokines, hormones from fat cells that may have potential in bone strengthening.

Royal Society Fellow



Professor Mark Cannell

Professor Mark Cannell of the Department of Physiology in the School of Medical Sciences has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Professor Cannell's interests are in increasing understanding of heart function in both healthy and diseased hearts. His research combines studies of cellular structure, microscopic calcium signalling and protein organisation.

Gluckman medal for eye expert

Professor Charles McGhee, head of the Department of Ophthalmology, has been awarded this year's Gluckman medal for his contribution to medical research.

Professor McGhee has held the Maurice Paykel Chair in Ophthalmology since 1998, and is also Director of the new National Eye Centre. His clinical and research interests are in corneal disease and refractive surgery, particularly aspects of corneal transplantation and keratoconus.

The Peter Gluckman Medal is the premier acknowledgment by the Faculty of achievement and contribution of current or former staff and students.



The Dean Professor Iain Martin, Gluckman medallist Professor Charles McGhee, Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon

- **Professor John Shaw**, the inaugural Head of the School of Pharmacy, has been reappointed as Head of School for an additional three year term.
- **Associate Professor Peter Black** has been appointed to the Chair in Clinical Pharmacology in the Department of Pharmacy and Clinical Pharmacology. Peter is a graduate of The University of Auckland and will be well known to many in faculty through his various appointments at FMHS where in recent years he has specialised in the area of respiratory pharmacology.
- **Nicolette Sheridan**, a senior lecturer in the School of Nursing, has been appointed as the new Associate Dean (EO). Nicolette replaces Associate Professor Nicola North who has had the role over the past 2-3 years.
- **Anne Kolbe** has been appointed as HOD of the Auckland Clinical School replacing Professor Ian Simpson. After qualifying from the University of Queensland, Anne has enjoyed a very distinguished career as a paediatric surgeon both here and in Australia. One highlight of her career path to date was her appointment in 2003 as President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, being the first woman in the world to be President of a surgical college.

New chair of national screening group

Professor Ross Lawrenson, head of the Waikato Clinical School, has been appointed as Chairman of the National Screening Advisory Committee, replacing Professor Alistair Woodward who has held the position for the last four years.

The Committee's role is to advise the Director-General of Health on screening policy and practice, including cancer screening and genetic screening, this advice covering the range of screening issues from effectiveness and value through to social and ethical considerations and advice on the level of resources required for high quality screening.



Professor Ross Lawrenson

Brainy school boy to represent New Zealand



Stephen MacKereth

An Auckland school boy will be heading to the US to represent New Zealand in the International Brain Bee Challenge.

Sixteen year old **Stephen MacKereth**, a year 11 student from Kings College, was named New Zealand winner of the Brain Bee Challenge finals held at the Queensland Brain Institute in August. Stephen now has the right to compete at the International Brain Bee Challenge in Baltimore in 2009.

The New Zealand Brain Bee is coordinated by Associate Professor Louise Nicholson of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, also a major sponsor of the competition.



Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Marketing and Communications Office
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142

Email: pamina.prasad@auckland.ac.nz

Phone: 64 9 373 7599 ext 84919

www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz