

► **From the President – Peter Burke**

The programme for this year's SCANZ conference must rate as one of our best ever.

Based on the theme of 'Communicating Science in the New Age', the organising committee has brought together an array of top quality speakers. It is the first time that we have had the Minister of Research, Science and Technology to officially open our conference. The other keynote speakers, Professor Paul Callaghan and Dr Mark Billingham, are internationally recognised experts in their particular fields. They will set the scene for the conference by focusing on where science might be and what technologies are likely to be around in 20 years time. You will note that we have some young people giving their perspectives over the two days and I think they will make a valuable contribution to the conference.

In the afternoon, Phil Battley will talk about his amazing project of tracking godwits from New Zealand to China. This is a story that has captured the attention of the media worldwide. Lloyd Davis from Otago University is back again and we all know how interesting his session will be.

Thanks to the support of the Royal Society, we have Kim Hill as a special guest for the final session of the first day. Kim, with her regular interviews of Professor Paul Callaghan on Radio National, has done much to promote science. She will give a brief talk on science communication and follow this up with an interview of Cindy Mitchener – an advertising guru who will talk about the marketing of science. The Kim Hill session will incorporate a social hour or two.

Dinner is at the Wellesley and we have Pamela Stirling, editor of the *New Zealand Listener*, as the after dinner speaker. Book early for the dinner as we only have 100 places available.

On Friday the conference moves to more practical sessions with Professor Julian Cribb from Australia leading the day with a provocative address – 'Can Science Communication Save the World?'. Julian has a most impressive CV having worked as a journalist on *The Australian*, *The National Farmer* and *The Australian Rural Times*. He worked for CSIRO and is currently Adjunct Professor in Science Communication at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Julian is followed by Peter Fowler talking about online writing, Alan Royal (Alan is a veterinarian and has held many senior roles in the primary sector including Deputy Director General of Agriculture) talking about designing websites for rural people and technology and business publisher Vincent Heeringa talking about business and science.

You will note that we have resisted the temptation to run what might loosely be termed training sessions at the conference and instead have opted to have a **Science Slam** session on Thursday where anyone from the audience can get up and tell the conference about an event or raise an issue about science or science communication. On the Friday we have set up a **Hot Tips** session where again people can briefly share a great idea or experience. The organising committee felt that this was better than running concurrent sessions and workshops which have their own challenges.

The afternoon winds up with an address on the 'Advanced Networks', a young person's perspective and finally a report by SCANZ members who attended the World Conference of Science Journalists in Melbourne.

### ***Promote the Conference***

I urge all of you to encourage your colleagues in science to attend our conference. Circulate the conference programme both electronically and also put copies on notice boards around your place of work. We want a good turn out and I believe that anyone with an interest in science will find this to be a great conference to attend. We can cater for up to 300 people at the venue.

The more people who begin to realise the value of science communication, the greater the recognition there will be for our profession of science communication. This conference is a chance to impress your colleagues.

### **AGM**

We are not planning to have the AGM at the conference, rather it will be held later in the year. Again can I urge all members to assist where possible in making SCANZ work. At present there is a small pool of people who are doing most of the work and this cannot continue.

**Don't miss this conference BOOK NOW and get the discounts on accommodation!**

**Peter Burke**

### **► News**

#### **Conference aims to show how to communicate science in the new age**

Where is science heading in the next 20 years?

What projects will scientists be working on then?

How will science be communicated 20 years hence?

What sort of technology will be in vogue?

Will the internet still be relevant?

Can science communication save the world?

These are just some of the exciting questions that are being posed to, and will be answered by, speakers at this year's conference.

**Communicating Science in the New Age** is the theme of the SCANZ conference being held at Victoria University in Wellington on June 28 and 29.

Venue – Victoria University, Pipitea Campus (near the Wellington Railway station)

Cost – SCANZ and ASC members \$150

Non Members \$200

Conference Dinner \$65 (limited to 100 people)

Accommodation – a special rate of \$142 per night has been negotiated with the Ibis Hotel in Featherston Street, near the conference venue. To obtain this rate quote SCA280607.

To register download the registration form from the conference page at <http://www.scanz.co.nz/conference.asp> and send to the conference organiser with your cheque or tick the box to request an invoice or direct credit details. Include a self-addressed envelope with your registration form if you need us to send you something back, including a receipt.

Send your registration (with a self-addressed envelope) to:

Conference Organiser

SCANZ

PO Box 12 276

Thorndon  
Wellington 6144

Registrations must be in by Thursday 21 June and all those received by Friday 1 June will go into a draw for prize.

## **Reports by SCANZ members from the World Conference of Science Journalists**

### **[New media: podcasting, Second Life and the future of the web](#)**

*By Nancy de Bueger*

Chair: Bernie Hobbs, ABC Science

Speakers:

Ian Allen, ABC Science Online

Abigail E. Thomas, New Media, ABC

Chris Smith, the Naked Scientist, Cambridge University, UK

James Massola, Eureka Street

The room was packed for this session. Apart from an uncooperative projector determined to display the presentations upside down at first (ironic for a session on the frontiers of technology), the session got off to a buzzing start with chair **Bernie Hobbs**. Many of you will remember Bernie from the very first SCANZ conference in Auckland in 2004, and she was as animated as ever.

First up was **Ian Allen**, who talked about how they set up the online science site for the ABC, originally called 'the lab'. They never tried to 'dumb' the science down, running a selection of their stories (aiming for three a day) together with world wire science stories.

He said allowing readers to interact and post comments is a key part of what makes the site work, together with the ability to link to related stories, which help build context.

The audience generated discussions in the online forum can create valuable content in their own right. For example, after the 9-11 attacks, those who started discussing why the World Trade Center towers collapsed as they did had come to the correct conclusion collectively weeks before the expert report was released.

When asked about the need for moderation of online forums, he said that forums tend to self-moderate to a large extent, so long as people are there to discuss things in goodwill. (Other panellists largely agreed: codes of conduct need to be set and daily moderation by the host is needed, but little 'policing' and removal of offensive entries is generally necessary.)

**Abigail Thomas** from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) has the coolest job. As manager of new media project development, she gets to do things like create an avatar (virtual self) for Second Life, the 3D virtual world, and cruise round within it looking for opportunities for the ABC as part of her job.

Second Life (secondlife.com) is not small fry. Linden dollars (the currency in Second Life) have real value and organisations like NASA are building islands, staging events and using the latest probe information to replicate the surface of Mars on their island.

The ABC has set up an island. Abi talked about the first time they tried to run an event and stream in a show live. Technology let them down, but what amazed her was it was just like a normal event – avatars milling around before it was due to start, chatting to each other, and there was even a building of excitement as the launch time approached.

She encouraged us to create avatars and explore Second Life for ourselves, but stressed that you need broadband.

**Chris Smith**, aka the Naked Scientist and virologist at Cambridge University, was up next, fully clad I might add. His weekly science podcast, known as The Naked Scientist, has gone platinum on the iTunes download charts. The secret of its success? The deliberate use of 'naked' in the title has worked to increase internet hits, Chris admitted.

Also, he thinks they have got the format right, which includes interviews with scientists but also kitchen experiments, to add a hands-on dimension for listeners. These home experiments are really simple and can be carried out with ordinary household items and people ring in with results or with explanations of the results. This allows a level of interactivity not normally possible with radio shows. He said the show was popular with 'taxi driving' mothers, as a fun and educational programme for the kids to listen to in the car.

He also believes in the power of reciprocal links: you link to my site, I'll link to yours, and now has such an agreement with *Nature* magazine.

The final speaker was **James Massola**, talking about the phenomenal growth of blogs for citizen journalism, now estimated to be up to around 100 million in number. Why the growth? One reason is removal of technology barriers. In the early days bloggers had to have considerable web development skills to build and update their blogs regularly but now there is plenty of free software available for content management systems that allow content to be entered in as text and published on the web at the push of a button.

The second big driver behind the growth of blogs is the desire to let the small guy have a say, rather than just the mass media.

How do you advertise or find blogs worth reading? James said word of mouth is the chief means. Six readers, tell six friends and they tell six friends, and so on. He recommends asking your friends what they read to get ideas.

How to make money from blogs is a more difficult question. The advertising model works for some high profile blogs but not all blogs. It's an issue that is still being worked out.

### [Wise up – the truth about TV science](#)

*By Nancy de Bueger*

Chair: Graham Phillips, ABC TV science

Speakers:

Peter Rees, National Geographic TV, US (formerly Mythbusters)

Catherine Marciniak, 'Life at 1' freelance documentary creator and director

Nalaka Gunawardene, TVE Asia Pacific, Sri Lanka

Sonya Pemberton, 'CRUDE', executive producer, ABC TV

To get the ball rolling on this session, chair Graham Phillips asked 'are TV science shows really science journalism?'

**Peter Rees**, the creator of the famous TV show 'Mythbusters', said the show is a science show, but they deliberately left the word 'science' out of it. He was adamant that science content doesn't have to be 'worthy'. He showed excerpts from the episode where they investigated the notion that 'pretty girls don't fart', by having a girl spend some time in special diapers with inbuilt 'gas' detectors. Silly premise but using latest technology (and often the latest peer-reviewed science) to answer the question.

In the question session, he agreed that the show was more popular with male audiences, and when asked what a female 'Mythbusters' show would look like, he welcomed anyone to tell him as he'd like to be involved in making the show.

**Catherine Marciniak** is involved in a project to make documentaries to illustrate the results of a large study of 10,000 Australian children from birth to seven, investigating how to give children the best start in life. They selected 11 children and families who they will follow up with over the next seven years.

Interesting for Catherine, instead of choosing the families for 'talent' (how well they appear on screen) subjects were selected to best represent the experiences of the 10,000 children and families in the study. This represented some difficulties from a television point of view, but it means the science in the show will be more accurate and relevant to the audience.

**Sonya Pemberton** talked about a new film called 'Crude', which explains the story of oil and the carbon cycle, of which she is executive producer. It's about climate change, but is trying to give a broader understanding: how long the oil took to form compared to how quickly are we burning it.

She described it as an old-style science documentary as it focuses on the science rather than telling the story through a person, however, they decided they needed a 'protagonist' to tell the story, so are telling it through the eyes of a carbon molecule. It is due to screen May 26 in Australia and hopefully will be distributed outside Australia soon.

Finally, **Nalaka Gunawardene**, producer of TVE Asia Pacific from Sri Lanka, explained how the broadcasting model is different in developing countries. The best approach there seems to be creating short non-linear science documentaries (from three to 15 minutes) about key topics that can attract people under 30, which he called 'digital natives'.

### [Building and maintaining science communication associations](#)

*By Nancy de Bueger*

Chair: Toss Gascoigne, Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

Presenter: Barbara Drillsma, Association of British Science Writers, UK

Panel: Tim Loughhead, Canadian Science Writers Association, Canada

Julie Martineau, Association des Communicateurs Scientifiques du Quebec, Canada

Fida Aljundi, Arab Science Journalists Association, Egypt

Gervais Mbarga, SciLife, Cameroon

Jenni Metcalfe, Australian Science Communicators

The session started with a presentation by **Barbara Drillsma** from the British Association of Science Writers who has written and printed a little book called *Setting up your own Science Journalists' Association: How to do it, what to do once it is formed and what to watch out for!*

She discussed the main steps for setting up an association:

1. Discover how many potential members you can attract
2. Run advertisements for a meeting
3. Hold a meeting, get suggestions for what the association should do and elect officers
4. Take care of basics such as detailed bookkeeping right from the beginning and try and keep costs low by not getting your own office at first
5. Get a constitution, but don't get too bogged down in detail
6. Find a way of communicating with members, either with a newsletter, webpage or email list
7. Run events (which likely means having to find sponsorship)
8. If you intend to charge members a subscription, charge it right from the beginning.

Other members of the panel were then given a chance to talk about their association.

The two types of events that everyone agreed were excellent for associations (from a visibility and sponsorship point of view and for lifting standards of science journalism) were awards and scholarships. Often these can be glitzy affairs and local media and other organizations can be happy to get involved as sponsors.

The age-old debate about whether press officers should be allowed to join was raised. The approach organisations take often depends on their potential membership numbers. So long as this is clearly agreed in the constitution, both approaches can work, although the issue can raise its head again from time to time within organisations.

Fida Aljundi, from the newly formed Science Journalists Association in Egypt, and Gervais Mbarga from SciLife in Cameroon, gave humbling accounts about overcoming difficulties to set up associations in their parts of the world.

### **Science versus business – a clash of cultures (and also a bit of a clash of panellists)**

*By Bette Flagler*

There is a huge and undesirable gap between science and business reporters. That's what Clive Cookson, science editor of Financial Times, had to say and it pretty much summed-up the session, chaired by Dr Allan Finkel, entrepreneur and executive publisher of Luna Media. Cookson was accompanied by Rebecca Wilson, consultant at Buchan Communications, David Blake, publisher of Bioshares (a weekly biotech stock report) and Simon Grose, freelance writer and editor.

Cookson granted that scientists have become more communicative in the last 20 years and that science-based businesses have upped their game, but he thinks there's still room for improvement. Biotechnology companies in particular, he said, seem to think quantity of press releases is better than quality – a habit he'd like to see reversed – and yet amidst a sea of press releases, the companies are hesitant to share honest financial information. He wants to know what something really costs and what value it has.

Those seem like pretty reasonable comments, as did those Wilson made about media releases. Make sure they aren't dumbed-down and have them written (or at least reviewed) by someone who understands the science, she said. Throwing responsibility to the journalists, she then said writers must "explain the science and not mislead the public."

Fair enough. But then Blake – who probably knows as much as anyone about publicly-held Australian biotechnology companies – used the words "ignorant, lazy and constrained," and said that "lots" of technologists are ignorant on how to communicate and that electronic media gives journalists more than just the press release as a source. Cookson accused Blake of suffering from journalistic cynicism – a common disease, but one he might try to get over.

Grose highlighted the need for journalists to research and confirm what was written in press releases, citing New Zealand's own Living Cell Technologies entering clinical trials in Russia when, he said, after a bit of digging around, he found the president of the xenotransplantation association was highly critical of the research trials. Journalists in the audience argued that deadlines, late arriving press releases and embargoed information meant that there was often little or no time for independent research – and, after all, some argued, freelancers didn't have enough time or money to do research - which seemed a slack excuse for not doing the job. It was a fairly heated debate, which included responses from the PR firm that handled LCT.

One point that was glaringly missing in this session was the responsibility for science journalists to understand business. There was plenty of mud flinging towards business and business writers not understanding science, but no acknowledgement that mutual knowledge is a shared responsibility.

### **New Zealand, New Thinking sponsored breakfast briefing**

*By Bette Flagler*

NZTE sponsored a breakfast session to showcase New Zealand science which drew about 75 people and was a casual discussion and overview of current work in progress. Niall Byrne, organiser of the conference, opened the session, bragging about how great New Zealand is and New Zealand science – which was a fantastic way to start.

First up from New Zealand was NZTE biotech sector manager, Stephanie Tulloch. Stephanie gave a great overview of biotechnology in New Zealand, setting the stage and giving a bit of history and future plans.

Next up was Katherine Trought, communications manager for Crop and Food Research. Katherine helped explain the CRI system and talked about the ongoing science at Crop and Food which is leading to new higher value products for New Zealand. These included the development of a new red gentian, currently being commercialised for the Japanese market, 'booster' broccoli which will be test marketed in New Zealand later this year, and new grains for Australia being worked on in partnership with CSIRO.

John Callan, communications manager at GNS then spoke about GNS in general, and then specifically about bio prospecting and cooperative work with the Tuaropaki Trust.

Questions from the session followed and were thoughtful and showed a fairly reasonable level of understanding of New Zealand and its science. I found it most heartwarming that after the session, international journalists were requesting more information from the speakers and other New Zealand delegates present. This highlighted a fantastic missed opportunity of providing more information on New Zealand science – I believe we can overcome this at the world congress in London two years from now and will work towards providing that.

### [Reporting science in emerging economies](#)

*By Veronika Meduna*

When South African journalist Christina Scott stood up in the dark auditorium with nothing but a burning candle in her hands she needed no words to describe the challenges for science journalists in developing countries. Power cuts, unreliable telecommunications and old equipment are part of the daily battle to get out to the right people to interview and to file stories on time. This session was an eye-opener for all of us who take infrastructural support for granted and are rarely forced to improvise, except perhaps when reporting from extreme environments.

The journalists on this panel spanned the globe from South Africa to Latin America, Africa, the Indian subcontinent and China. They all raised the issue that science publishing, and therefore science reporting, has a strong bias towards the developed world and the English language. In addition, they all felt they were often up against barriers put up by their respective governments, ranging from an unwillingness to discuss scientific developments openly and critically right through to unmitigated corruption and a PR spin towards research that provides the biggest political advantage, for example space programmes. In the words of Sri Lankan journalist Nalaka Gunawardene, this nationalistic approach paralyses real investigative science journalism, and science journalists in developing countries have to be particularly dedicated to work in an environment of hostility and sometimes even personal threats.

### [Poles apart but together in science for International Polar Year](#)

*By Veronika Meduna*

Despite being polar opposites, the speakers on this panel had one message for their audience: the world's polar regions are the first to show the effects of climate change and the time to act is now. Three Canadians and three Australians used their combined experience of many seasons spent in polar regions to bring the audience up to date on the changes that are already documented in both the Arctic and Antarctica. Louis Fortier, professor at the Université Laval in Canada, warned that a lack of political action could lead to catastrophic consequences as some of the changes already

observed in the Arctic included a 30% drop in summer Arctic ice cover over the past three decades. The panel also heard from Stephen Rintoul, a physical oceanographer who leads the Climate Variability and Change Programme at the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems CRC. He described the crucial role the Southern Ocean plays in transporting heat around the globe and in absorbing carbon dioxide, and showed that observable changes in salinity and density could affect the water's ability to sink and subsequently slow the ocean circulation.

All panellists are involved in long-running research projects in polar regions and take part in official activities to mark the International Polar Year.

### **Uncovering the hobbit, *Homo floresiensis* (Wednesday, April 18)**

*By Veronika Meduna*

This was a fantastic panel. The two scientists (Chris Turney and Bert Roberts) who had been involved in the discovery and dating of the hobbit remains in 2003 were passionate about their work and honest about the controversy it caused. Deborah Smith (*Sydney Morning Herald* science editor) added a frank perspective on the competing media interests and why coverage at times focused on controversy rather than the discovery itself. The hobbit saga has all the hallmarks of a great story. A discovery that overturns much of what we thought we knew about the evolution of humans, a nasty scientific feud that undermines the credibility of the researchers, intense rivalry that leads one opposing archaeologist to destroy evidence and to change skeletal remains so that they could be interpreted in his favour – all of that under the spotlight of intense worldwide media interest.

### **Reporting nuclear power**

*By Leanne Scott*

I was very curious to hear Ziggy Switkowski, and others, talk about the recent arrival of “nuclear power” as a hot agenda item in Australian politics - not something I would have predicted four years ago when I left Canberra.

Switkowski, ex-Telstra CEO and also a nuclear physicist, recently delivered a report to the Australian Government on the feasibility of a domestic nuclear power industry. He spoke to the conference of the possibilities of using nuclear energy to reduce Australia's contribution to greenhouse gases and global warming. He said he thought people were becoming more open to the idea of nuclear power, following the Government's initiation of the debate. Another interesting speaker was German freelance journalist Hanns Neubert. In his country, the current political move is towards closure of all nuclear power plants. Neubert described Germany's investment in solar and other renewable energy sources, as well as the focus on energy-efficient housing. He told me that Australia's nuclear debate felt like something from a past era. Speakers also discussed whether the nuclear industry is more accountable and responsive than in the past and whether journalists are paying enough attention.

### **A peer review of peer review**

*By Leanne Scott*

This was a session with some very impressive speakers, including the editor-in-chief of *Nature*, Phil Campbell, the editor-in-chief of *Scientific American*, John Rennie, and Warwick Anderson, CEO of Australia's National Health & Medical Research Council. Given the positions held by these speakers, it was unsurprising to hear them hand down an unanimous endorsement of peer review. There was a small amount of acknowledgement that the current system could be perceived as being weighted in favour of scientists from wealthier (western) nations, but Campbell said *Nature* addressed this issue in three ways:

- Training editors to deal with it
- Making sure editors paid visits to developing countries
- Re-reading the detail of the science as opposed to giving weight to names.

Anderson raised an interesting issue; that of the tired scientist asked to referee too many journals per month. Nevertheless, he underlined the “responsibility” of older scientists to the system that had seen them through. Training was another issue raised: scientists are never trained to become skilled reviewers!

## **Synchrotron**

*By Leanne Scott*

For me the visit to the Australian Synchrotron was a real buzz! All those electrons travelling at almost the speed of light...

The synchrotron is based near Monash University and from the outside looks like a sports stadium. But inside, instead of an arena, you find a round, walled machine. Within the machine the electrons give off light-beams (radiation) across multiple wavelengths. These beams are captured at various points around the synchrotron and this is where experiments of all types can be conducted. Scientists put all sorts of material in front of the radiation beam-lines in order to understand the molecular structure, conformation and function of the substance they are researching: anything from plant cells to metal alloys, ceramics and polymers. For me it was an extremely useful trip as Crop & Food Research is one of the New Zealand CRIs investing in the facility.

(For more on the Synchrotron see the Listener's Health and Science column [Shedding Light](#) )

## **Satellite Editing Workshop**

*By Janette Busch*

The editing workshop was held before the main conference and was presented by Janet Salisbury (Biotext Science Information Consultants). It featured a panel of three science writers/editors who each made short presentations about the how's and why's of their particular editing roles. Lynda Worland (Principal of Oz-Brij Communication) spoke of the differences between substantive editing and rewrites and the need to discuss what is required with the client before beginning the job so that purpose of the document is clear. Kathie Stove, a freelance editor and writer, spoke of the emotional impact of the writing task on the writer and said that editors deserve more recognition and should be an integral part of the writing team. Daniel Park, science editor for Crop & Food Research, said that a good editor should have a passion for clarity, a confidence, and not arrogance, in their ability and aim to produce a clear, durable, flexible, end-product. A good editor, he said, should move quickly, tread lightly and leave no trace. In the second part of the workshop there was a discussion about whether an Australasian Science Editors Association should be formed and the general consensus was that this would be a good move.

The take-home message for me was the need to be clear about the purpose of the document and the type of editing required before commencing work and the need for recognition of the importance of the input editors make to the quality of the final document

## **Writing Plain English**

*By Janette Busch*

This workshop was presented by the Australasian Medical Writers' Association,

Jill Nicholson, an experienced technical writer, spoke about the importance of communication (the familiar sender - noise - receiver model) and said that to be successful communicators, we need to eliminate the noise. She spoke about the concept of writing in plain English and listed the 10 Most Common Problems in Technical Writing - it was apparent that not all participants were aware of them. Jill then passed quickly through other common issues writing and provided a handout with practice exercises for us to hone our skills with later.

What I enjoyed about this workshop was the opportunity to increase and refresh my editing skills and be among like-minded people who are also interested in English usage and grammar.

### Reporting science in emerging economies

*By Janette Busch*

Six journalists spoke from their experience in reporting from emerging economies. Tata Padma (India) spoke about the lack of resources and the dependence of newspapers on wire services and overseas newspapers. Jia Hepeng (China) said some journalists have been deported so there is a need for science journalists to adapt in order to survive in this hard environment. Nalaka Gunawardene (Sri Lanka) shared that their public science is not accessible, so they often use stories from diaspora scientists. Christine Scott (South Africa) explained the trials of working with unreliable technologies and many official languages. Talent Ng'andwe (Zambia) said Zambia has few newspapers but, in general, there is freedom of the press. Luisa Massarani (Brazil) spoke of the lack of good press officers at universities and their reluctance to agree that there was any interesting research.

I was impressed by the dedication and courage of these science journalists.

### Stem cells and bioethics

*By Phil Johnstone*

Chair: Robin Marantz Henig

Speakers:

Geoff Carr, UK Science Editor, The Economist

Mal Washer, medical doctor and Australian MP

Janet Salisbury, Australian scientist, founder of consulting firm Biotext

Peter Mountford, UK businessman, Stem Cell Sciences

This session looked at the way the ethical issues surrounding stem cell research have been debated amongst the general public, scientists and policymakers, especially in Australia.

Peter Mountford said the potential benefits of stem cell research were not being over-hyped, saying they were "infinitely bigger" than the IT and computing boom of the past decade. "Stem cell research is fundamentally different to what medical researchers have been looking at before. Up until now it has been about how to stop a bug or stop a cancer. With stem cells, we're trying to use what's normal and healthy to improve quality of life." He said with the technology moving fast, a key role for the media is to help keep the discussion focused on a rational discussion of the benefits and potential issues.

Geoff Carr said stem cell research had become a surrogate for a different argument. The international debate illustrated different ways of looking at the world, essentially between people who have a rationalist versus a "more superstitious" approach. "In the West, no matter whether or not you are religious personally, our Christian cultural heritage provides the platform from which we view the world. It's very hard to stop 1500 years of ways of thinking." He said the UK debate had been diffused by having an independent review body. However, if stem cell research led to a cure for Type 2 diabetes, for example, the general public would quickly wonder what they had been worried about and there would be anger at those who had opposed it.

Mal Washer had fronted the public debate and back-room arm-twisting which saw the Australian Federal Parliament overturn the ban on therapeutic cloning after a rare conscience vote. The decision is now being voted on at state level. "We won this debate not because everyone in society understood the issues, but because we won the battle of credibility," he said. Loud, vocal minorities did not represent the people he dealt with. "At the end of the day, when faced with bad, chronic disease, people want a medical system which can help them or their family."

Janet Salisbury described the thorough review process which had been set up in Australia, and said that members of the public often went to great lengths to be informed, even on highly technical matters. She said there was much to be learned from the findings of the UK Science in Society report in 2000, which stressed that science is not owned by scientists but by society. "We can't just put money into educating society – we need to have scientists engage in a dialogue."

### **Vaccines: politics vs science**

*By Phil Johnstone*

Chair: Pallab Ghosh, BBC News science correspondent

Speakers:

Sir Gus Nossal: Immunologist, consultant to WHO and Gates Foundation

Ian Frazer: Immunologist, former Australian of the Year

An excellent session, kicked off by Pallab Ghosh who noted the BSE crisis in the 1990s led to a lack of trust by the UK public in experts and politicians. This allowed claims (later disproved) against the MMR vaccine to take root. The debate was not just about science – it was about lifestyle, politics and culture, he said.

Gus Nossal – an iconic and much-loved Australian 'elder scientist' – made the case for the huge global health benefits delivered by vaccines. Ill-informed rumours about the polio vaccine in Nigeria in 2003 had set back the global eradication of the disease and showed that world opinion mattered.

He told the story of his involvement as a consultant to the Bill and Belinda Gates Foundation – which boosted annual vaccine investment in 1997 from US\$57m to around US\$3 billion expected in 2008. This still wasn't enough however, and Nossal outlined a number of innovative solutions to further boost funding. Akin to WW2 victory bonds, the International Finance Facility Scheme in 2006 offered 10 year bonds with a 5.3% return, guaranteed by governments. They were over-subscribed. Another scheme in the planning will subsidise the future purchase of vaccines not yet available – offering an incentive for companies to invest in vaccines for developing countries. He defended the current IP system, saying "the expenses incurred after the work is done by the boffin in a lab are so huge, that companies will not be able to do that development work unless they can recover that via IP".

Ian Frazer – who helped invent technology which led to the first vaccine against the virus which causes cervical cancer – told the development story of vaccine Gardasil. He said a more scientifically literate community was needed. Eighty percent of Australians had no secondary education in science. Society needed to see science as something they were part of – not something handed down on tablets.

He said society needed to understand that basic science underpins applied science; that this connection is not predictable; the process is slow and that market and political forces determine the timing of what is available.

Ian Frazer said scientists needed commercial partners, who in turn required an IP position, ways to minimise their risk and had to conduct education to aid distribution and use. Medical science breakthroughs did take place, but these were generally achieved by teams not individuals. He said the rationalisation of global vaccine manufacturing was due mostly to "very tough" regulatory requirements.

*Disclaimer: Phil Johnstone previously worked for Merck & Co. which developed and markets MMR and the Gardasil vaccine*

**Inspired? And the next [World Federation of Science Journalists](#) will be held in London in 2009.**



### **New prize for creative science writing**

The Royal Society of New Zealand, in association with the *New Zealand Listener* and the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML), at Victoria University of Wellington, has established a prize for creative science writing. The Royal Society of New Zealand Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing will have two cash prizes of \$2500 each for the best fiction and non-fiction entries. The entries will be shortlisted by IIML and the winners judged by Radio NZ National presenter Kim Hill. The competition has been established in response to the popularity of the Are Angels OK? Project, which brought together writers and scientists. The prize is named after Bill Manhire, who directed the collaboration with physicist Professor Paul Callaghan. There will be a different topic theme each year. In 2007, it is climate change. Writers will be asked to base their entries on this statement:

“Many scientists believe that climate change is a serious threat to human civilisation. Regardless of climate change, we need to find sustainable forms of agriculture, manufacturing and energy. How will we respond? How can we respond?”

This theme applies to both the fiction and creative non-fiction categories. Entries will be judged on their literary merits, and the extent to which they are likely to engage the reader. The *New Zealand Listener* will publish the winning entries. The competition closes on 16 August. Full details of the entry conditions are at <http://www.listener.co.nz> For further information, contact [Glenda.lewis@rsnz.org](mailto:Glenda.lewis@rsnz.org) 027 210 0997 or 04 470 5758.

### **MacDiarmid awards to celebrate young scientists**

The fourth MacDiarmid Young Scientists of the Year Awards will be held in Auckland on Wednesday 20 June at the Sky City Convention Centre in Auckland. The awards recognise the excellence and innovative spirit of New Zealand's young researchers, with top marks given to entries that combine brilliant, innovative research with an ability to communicate it to a non-scientific audience.

The awards were named after the late Professor Alan MacDiarmid. Peter Burke, who established the inaugural awards in 2004, has been commissioned to compile a video tribute to be played at the awards ceremony.

A rigorous three-phase judging process is almost complete, with judges reporting a high calibre of research and strong interest in the categories of future science and technology and health related research. More than 120 of New Zealand's leading postgraduate researchers provided a written summary of their work for first-phase judging, with almost 50 per cent accepted for further consideration. In the second phase entrants submitted a poster and either a short essay or video to communication judges. The judges were Philip Simpson, author of Montana Award winning book *Pohutakawa and Rata*, Professor Judy Motion, formerly Professor of Communication at Waikato University and now at the University of Wollongong, and Lillian Ng, TV3 reporter and GP. The brief for the communication entries was to make them appealing to secondary school age students.

The overall winner's package includes a \$10,000 cash prize and a trip to the UK to attend the BA Science Festival, sponsored by the British Council. The runner up and the five category winners will each receive \$5,000. Categories are: Understanding Planet Earth; Science and our Society; Advancing Human Health and Wellbeing; Future Science and Technologies; and Adding Value to Nature.

For tickets to the MacDiarmid Young Scientists of the Year Awards gala dinner please contact Haley Doreen 09 309 2440 [haley@avenues.co.nz](mailto:haley@avenues.co.nz)

### **After 50 years, it's still *Just the Tip of the Iceberg***

To celebrate New Zealand's 50-year involvement in the Antarctic, Antarctica New Zealand and the Royal Society of New Zealand are hosting the *Antarctica: 50 Years on the Ice - Just the Tip of the Iceberg* Conference in Wellington July 2-6 (just after the SCANZ conference). The conference aims

to present the successes of the past (International Geophysical Year to the present day), and enthuse New Zealand about its future in Antarctica. In particular five key themes within Antarctic science and policy will be explored throughout the conference:

- Collaborations between New Zealand, and other nations working in the Ross Sea region  
Future directions and issues
- New Zealand innovations
- Directions and achievements built on the International Geophysical Year
- Impacts and influences on the international arena.

Antarctica New Zealand and the Royal Society of New Zealand invite those with any interests in Antarctica to attend the conference and celebration, to build on the past and work towards the future in the spirit of the International Polar Year (2007-2009). For more information, go to <http://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz/article/6973.html#10429> and look at the line-up of 26 national and 11 international speakers. Registration information can also be found here.

### **Hot Science to start online live science TV channel**

'Hot Science' is planning to deliver an online Live Science Television Channel as a world-leading development this year. It's the first major upgrade planned for the innovative 'Hot Science' website that won the inaugural Feature Website category in this year's Qantas Media Awards. 'Hot Science TV' will be launched as a live online science television channel running 24 hours a day. With the support of The MacDiarmid Institute additional enhancements are planned which will enable Hot Science to offer valuable text, graphics and interactive supporting information for selected videos. 'Hot Science' was designed, built and managed by e-net Limited [[www.e-net.co.nz](http://www.e-net.co.nz)] initially with a grant from the Science & Technology Promotions Fund (MORST). First launched in May 2006, it is now home to a host of videos featuring New Zealand scientists and science stories. The site, [www.hotscience.co.nz](http://www.hotscience.co.nz), now has three main sections where videos can be freely viewed or downloaded by viewers from all around the world. 'Hot Science' features the 'Freemason's Big Science Competition', run in collaboration with The Royal Society of New Zealand. The national secondary school competition attracts entries from all over the country, and videos from the 2007 competition winner and finalists have recently been posted. The 'Hot Science Videos' section features custom-made profiles of New Zealand scientists from The MacDiarmid Institute, The University of Otago, Lincoln University and the Ministry of Fisheries explaining their research to viewers, with more videos in pre-production planning. The site also hosts a growing collection of 'Extra Science Videos' including the  $e=mc^2$  video series produced by e-net, NASA Connect videos and many other resources for students or anyone fascinated by science. For more information please contact Gresham Bradley, Director of Programming, e-net & e-cast Ltd. on <mailto:gresham@e-net.co.nz> or by phone on (09) 300-6888 or mobile 021-473-741.

### **Hotshots film shark research for the Biotechnology Learning Hub**

Armed with video cameras and microphones, a group of students from Wellington College visited NIWA in November 2006 to film their teachers research on sequencing shark DNA for the Biotechnology Learning Hub ([www.biotechlearn.org.nz](http://www.biotechlearn.org.nz)). Wellington College teacher Andrea Shaw worked at NIWA for a year pursuing her passion for science and biotechnology as part of a New Zealand Science, Mathematics, and Technology Teacher Fellowship. The Year 10 students Michael Saywell, Hugo Dobson, Callum Butler, Carlos Bowkett, and Ben Speak researched her story, interviewed her on location, and filmed her in the lab isolating and amplifying shark DNA. This work is part of an ambitious international project, Fish-Bol, which aims to catalogue DNA sequences or barcodes for all fish species. The filming was part of a Hotshots student video programme developed by the Biotechnology learning Hub in conjunction with CWA New Media. The students received a brief to produce, film, and deliver video coverage for a Sequencing Shark DNA story for the Biotechnology Learning Hub. During an intensive three days the students worked with professional documentary filmmaker Anna Cottrell. They spent a day at NIWA's Greta Point location interviewing Andrea and filming her at work in and around the NIWA facilities. Andrea took them through a variety of lab processes and was able to provide them with her own video footage showing DNA samples being taken from sharks off the South Australian coast. The students also included footage of themselves on-camera, reflecting on their own perspectives about the experience and what they had learned. 14-year old Hugo Dobson found it increased his

knowledge, "I learnt a lot about science, about sharks, especially in the Wellington area, and the Fish-Bol Project. By filming it, it was a lot easier to learn because first of all we had to understand it." The Sequencing Shark DNA video clips and other Hotshots student videos can be viewed online at: [http://www.biotechlearn.org.nz/multimedia/hotshots\\_student\\_videos](http://www.biotechlearn.org.nz/multimedia/hotshots_student_videos)

The Biotechnology Learning Hub is an online environment, created by the University of Waikato, to make modern biotechnology more accessible to school teachers and students. Research organisations with local biotechnology stories suitable for Hotshots student videos are invited to email the Hub with their ideas at: <mailto://enquiries@biotechlearn.org.nz>

### **Studying Planet Earth and Beyond?**

The Carter Observatory can bring the Universe to you. The observatory's "Stars in Schools" Outreach programme uses the only Portable Digital Planetarium in New Zealand to enable you and your students to explore the wonders of the Universe in your school. The session length is normally 45 minutes and can teach six classes per day; or hour long sessions teaching 5 classes in a day. The dome can accommodate up to 30 students per session.

A session can cover the following:

Earth's Wild Ride: a 20 minute immersive show looking at the Moon and the Earth, covering eclipses, space exploration, Asteroids and dinosaurs, the water cycle on the Earth.

Solar System: a 20-minute look at the planets of our exploring: Day & Night, seasons on the Earth and other planets. Look at the individual planets and their environments, composition and orbits.

Night Sky: a 20-minute session covering the constellations, the motion of the Sun & Moon, Moon phases, legends and mysteries of the night sky.

All the Carter needs is a room (classroom or hall) with a height of 3.5 meters or more to set up the dome and other equipment; it takes around 30 minutes to set up. If you have any further queries please contact either by phone on 494 8322 or preferably by e-mail at: [john.field@carterobservatory.org](mailto:john.field@carterobservatory.org)

### **New UC-hosted website helps secondary school chemistry teachers**

A one-stop website for secondary school chemistry teachers has been launched with the help of Canterbury University expertise. ChemTeach (<http://www.chemteach.ac.nz>) has been set up by a team from the College of Science and UC Education Plus at the College of Education in conjunction with the New Zealand Institute of Chemistry (NZIC) and Victoria University of Wellington. Designed to be a comprehensive source of information for chemistry teachers, the site offers a range of teaching resources and assessment tools as well as information about chemistry education initiatives, events, competitions, news and links to other relevant websites. One of the site's major features is an online forum where teachers can email chemistry questions and have them answered by experts. "There is also an archive of questions asked by chemistry teachers since NCEA was introduced so teachers can look through them for information as well," said College of Science Outreach Co-ordinator Rebecca Hurrell who maintains the website. "It (the website) is an amazing resource just in terms of answers to questions and solutions to teachers' problems." Graeme Tinkler, a Ministry of Education-funded senior subject advisor in chemistry for the South Island at Education Plus, provided much of the content for the website and has been running workshops that include using the ChemTeach website for teachers around the South Island. He said the response had so far been "incredibly positive". "While we still have a lot of information still to post on the site it is becoming a repository for a range of scattered resources that is easily accessible both nationally and internationally," he said. "Teachers don't have to go anywhere else for information and, if they do have to go elsewhere, this website provides links to other sites." Ms Hurrell said the NZIC's education sub-committee initiated the project, providing funding for the website's initial development. ChemTeach was launched on 1 March and is hosted by the University of Canterbury. Monitoring support is also being provided by the University's web team.

### **Keku's journey takes her to Auckland Museum**

For its stage of Egypt: Beyond the Tomb Auckland Museum has made a real effort to present the exhibition as a family show by bringing the story of 23- year-old Keku to the fore. Her father's voice is also clear in the story line as it unfolds and we follow Keku from prior to her death, through mummification, her journey through the perils of the underworld into the promised afterlife. After a hugely successful season in Wellington, this exhibition about ancient Egypt started its Auckland season in the new exhibition hall at Auckland Museum with the pageantry one would expect. The exhibition runs through until August 12 with late nights on Wednesdays that tie into a lecture series, a food event, film screenings, live performances and much more. Primary school classes are heavily booked to view the exhibition and take part in the specially devised education programme. Details of the education offering and the public events and activities can be found on the museum website <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

### **Have your say on science with RSNZ**

Have you taken a look at the Science Topics on RSNZ's website recently? If not, try <http://www.rsnz.org>. Science Topics is on the left of the page. The Society has started a discussion group associated with each science topic. For example, you can subscribe to Energy-Talk and eight other groups and add you own views on the issues of the day. To subscribe to the ones you want (and any of the other 32 groups RSNZ hosts), go to <http://www.rsnz.org/directory/elist.php> and check the relevant boxes.

The Science Topics lists are:

Energy: [energy-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:energy-talk@rsnz.org)

Genes and biology: [genebio-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:genebio-talk@rsnz.org)

Health sciences: [health-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:health-talk@rsnz.org)

Land, water, air sciences: [landwaterair-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:landwaterair-talk@rsnz.org)

Maths physics & chemistry: [mathphyschem-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:mathphyschem-talk@rsnz.org)

Nanotechnology: [nanotech-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:nanotech-talk@rsnz.org)

Social Sciences: [socscience-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:socscience-talk@rsnz.org)

Space and stars: [space-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:space-talk@rsnz.org)

Sustainable development: [sustainable-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:sustainable-talk@rsnz.org)

Xenotransplantation: [xenotrans-talk@rsnz.org](mailto:xenotrans-talk@rsnz.org)

### **New network for heritage interpreters**

A New Zealand network for people involved in heritage interpretation *INNZ, Interpretation Network New Zealand* has just been launched. INNZ is a not for profit, national group formed to share ideas and experience, and foster professional standards and practice in interpretation. Check out our website [www.innz.net.nz](http://www.innz.net.nz) for membership benefits, the networks goals, our upcoming workshops and to download a membership form.

### **And for writers ....**

NZBio's Christine Ross has written to SCANZ to say a new international publication *The Journal of Life Sciences* is looking for writers. The managing editor, Eric Wahlgren, can be contacted at: <mailto:eric.wahlgren@blsmg.com>. To find out more about the magazine, visit its website: <http://www.tjols.com>



### **► Forthcoming Events**

What: **Egypt: Beyond the Tomb**

When: May 25 - August 12

Where: Auckland Museum

Theme: Death rituals of the age-old Egyptian civilisation.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Celebrate Matariki!**

When: 15 June – 15 July 2007

Where: Auckland Museum  
Theme: Family-oriented month long Matariki Festival  
Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Celebrate Matariki: Whetū Harakeke**

When: Saturdays 16, 23, & 30 June, 7 July  
10am – 12pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Te Kakano – Pacific Peoples Information Centre

Theme: Saturday morning during our Matariki celebrations learn how to fold stars from Harakeke (NZ Flax). Materials and instructions will be provided. Meet in Te Kakano, located in the Maori Court. All ages and abilities welcome.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Mythology of Tangaroa**

When: 20 June 7.30pm

Where: Auckland Museum - APEC room

Theme: This lecture, presented by Rawiri Taonui, will cover four themes: Tangaroa in Maori mythology; the evolution and origins of Tangaroa in Pasifika and Austronesian mythologies; Tangaroa in art including traditional and contemporary forms, and the role of traditional mythological and customary beliefs in the modern practice of sustainable management of fisheries.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Celebrate Matariki: New Zealand Film Archive Programme - Kaimoana**

When: Wednesday 27 June, 7.30pm

Where: Auckland Museum - APEC room

Theme: The New Zealand Film Archive presents a programme of historical films from the 1920's to 1970s illustrating the way it was when kaimoana was plentiful and a full net was assured.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Annual SCANZ conference**

When: 28-29 June 2007

Where: Pipitea Campus, Victoria University of Wellington

Theme: Communicating Science in the New Age

Website: <http://www.scanz.co.nz/conference.asp>

Contact: <mailto:Nancy.DeBueger@frst.govt.nz>

What: **Matariki legends from around the world**

When: Saturday 30 June, 2pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: What do Halloween, Atlantis, Subaru, the American Presidential elections, the Petticoat Lane market in London, the ship Titanic and atlases all have in common? Each can be traced to the legends of the Seven Sisters of the Pleiades- Presented by Munya Andrews

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **The Significance of Tapa to the Pacific Community**

When: Saturday 30 June, 3.30pm

Where: Auckland Museum - APEC room

Theme: Lecture and demonstration of Fijian Tapa or Masi

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Making of a Mummy Show**

When: Daily during the school holidays 30 June – 15 July

10:30am, 11.30am & 12.30pm,

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: \$5 for children or \$2 with an exhibition ticket. Accompanying adults free with admission donation ticket or exhibition entry ticket. Free for members.

A fun interactive show about why and how the ancient Egyptians mummified their dead.  
Recommended for children aged 5 and up.  
Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Antarctica: 50 Years on The Ice - Just the Tip of the Iceberg Conference**

When: 2-6 July 2007

Where: Duxton Hotel, Wellington

Theme: Celebrating 50 years of New Zealand's involvement in the Antarctic.

Website: <http://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz/article/6973.html#10429>

Contact: <mailto:liga@cwlnz.com>

What: **New Zealand Association of Clinical Research (NZACRes) 2007 Conference**

When: 5 - 6 July 2007

Where: Sky City Convention Centre, Auckland

Theme: This is a one and a half day conference with theme Science to Clinical. The first half day will consist of a number of interesting workshops (communication, data management, researching within Maori community, project management, and shipping samples overseas) and poster competition. The second day will bring speaker sessions on challenging ethical, legal and regulatory aspects of bringing science to clinical. Furthermore, there will be informal presentations on any research related topics during the Open invitation session and best CRA/study 2006-2007 coordinators will be awarded. You may want to visit one of the research related exhibitors that will be present on both days.

Website: <http://www.nzacres.org.nz>.

Contact: <mailto:info@nzacres.org.nz>

What: **Whale Strandings exhibition**

When: 13 July - 19 August

Where: Pictorial Gallery, Auckland Museum

Theme: Exhibition of recent work by West Auckland photographer Jan Young.

Website: <http://http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Egypt: Hieroglyphics, Mythology and Art**

When: 3 sessions, Wednesday 18 July - 1 August, 7.30 - 9pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: The Egyptian writing systems, mythology, and art. Lecture Series in association with Centre for Continuing Education:

Website: <http://www.cce.auckland.ac.nz>

What: **The Hieroglyphs of Ancient Egypt**

When: 18 July, 7.30 pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: this lecture, presented by Aaron Smith, will discuss the ancient Egyptians hieroglyphics

Website: <http://http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **The Mythology of Ancient Egypt**

When: 25 July, 7.30pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: Presented by: Jennifer Hellum this lecture unravels the mythology of the Egyptians

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **The Meanings Behind Tattooing Designs in the Pacific**

When: Saturday 28 July, 3pm

Where: Auckland Museum - APEC room

Themes: Tattooing is an art that has made its way back to our modern society, after being banned by the early missionaries throughout the Pacific in the 1800s. Come along and hear some fascinating stories on the meanings behind these intricate body designs and adornment.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **The Art of Ancient Egypt**

When: 1 August, 7.30 pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: Presented by: Jennifer Hellum this lecture looks at the art of ancient Egypt

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Fijian Winter Lecture Series**

Where: Auckland Museum - APEC room

Theme: Tarisi Vunidilo, originally from Natokalau, Yawe, Kadavu, from Southern Fiji will share various topics that are dear to the hearts of Pacific people.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **The Role of Pottery in Prehistoric Fiji**

When: Saturday 25 August, 3pm

Where: Auckland Museum - APEC room

Theme: Archaeologists have uncovered remnants of ceramic pottery on old village sites in the Pacific. In Fiji, various types of pottery have pointed to different times of human habitation in the last three thousand years. Come and view various pottery with interesting designs and hear how archaeologists have uncovered the key to different times when early Fijians inhabited key village sites. Tarisi will be signing her new book *The Story of Lapita Pottery*, at the end of the session.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good**

When: Sunday, 29 July, 2pm

Entry with admission donation ticket or Membership card.

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: In this family lecture, leading animal behaviour researcher Jonathan Balcombe. will discuss his theory that animals - like humans - enjoy themselves. He proposes that the possibility of positive feelings in creatures other than humans has ethical ramifications for both science and society.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **The Lucy Cranwell Lecture for 2007 - Thomas Frederick Cheeseman**

When: Thursday, 2 August, 7.30

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: Ewen Cameron, Curator of Botany, Auckland Museum will discuss Cheeseman's many botanical accomplishments including how he assembled his magnum opus: *Manual of the New Zealand Flora* (1906, 2nd ed. 1925) which was not totally superseded until 2000. He will also look at Cheeseman in the context of his era and the way in which he was strongly supported at the time by the botanists at Kew Gardens in London.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **RSNZ Leonard Cockayne Lecture**

When: Wednesday 8 August, 7.30pm (Conservation Week)

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: **Birds in Paradise – the Role of Birds in Shaping New Zealand's Terrestrial Biodiversity**

In this lecture, Dr William G. Lee, Landcare Research, Dunedin, will examine the interaction between birds and the environment during the history of New Zealand.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Whale Tales of the South Pacific and the Bahamas**

When: Wednesday 15 August, 7.30pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: Nan Daeschler Hauser, President and Director of the Centre for Cetacean Research and Conservation works in Rarotonga where she has undertaken studies on the biology, behaviour,

and ecology of a variety of cetaceans for the past 10 years. Her work includes documenting populations of bottlenose dolphins, spotted dolphins, sperm whales, dense-beaked whales and many other species in the Bahamas. Nan's efforts over the past 13 seasons have revealed a novel feeding technique by bottlenose dolphins, the first underwater footage of beaked whales and underwater footage of a sperm whale with a broken jaw. She was a key player in the creation of a 2 million square kilometre whale sanctuary in the waters of the Cook Islands.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

What: **Hochstetter Lecture - Environmental Change – A View From Down under**

When: Tuesday, 21 August, 7.30pm

Where: Auckland Museum - Auditorium

Theme: Professor Paul Williams, School of Geography, Geology and Environmental Science, University of Auckland, has undertaken pioneering research in high resolution paleo-environmental reconstruction and leads a major ongoing FRST-funded research programme studying the palaeoclimate record found in New Zealand tree-rings and cave deposits. His particular contribution is on the elucidation of the cave-based record of palaeoclimate from the present time back to the Last Glacial Maximum, using data from caves in Waitomo, Hawkes Bay, Nelson, West Coast and Fiordland.

Website: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>



► **Reading corner:**

**Climate change: A guide for the perplexed**

The *New Scientist* offers [Climate change: A guide for the perplexed](#). The guide offers up responses to 26 of what it considers are the most common climate myths and misconceptions. The line-up includes questions and arguments like: "We can't do anything about climate change"; "It's been far warmer in the past, what's the big deal?" and "It's too cold where I live - warming will be great."

To read all the *New Scientist* responses see:

<http://environment.newscientist.com/channel/earth/dn11462>

**Stumbling on Happiness wins science book prize**

A scientific exploration of the various ways people attempt to make themselves happy has won the annual Royal Society Prize for Science Books. Daniel Gilbert's *Stumbling on Happiness*. It beat five other titles including Henry Nicholl's *Lonesome George*, an account of the last known individual of a subspecies of Galapagos tortoise. Gilbert won £10,000 while each runner up received £1,000 at a ceremony at the Royal Society. Professor Colin Pillinger, chair of the judges, said: "*Stumbling on Happiness* is an outstanding and highly readable winner of this year's Royal Society Prize for Science Books. Daniel Gilbert's voice provides a witty companion throughout this exploration of the science behind the pursuit of happiness an issue which fascinates us all. He uses cognitive science and psychology to provide intriguing insights into human nature, helping us to understand why we make the decisions we do."

**20 Things You Didn't Know About... Movie Scientists**

Scientists first appeared in the movies in 1902, when bearded astronomers shot out of a cannon into space in Georges Méliès's *Le Voyage Dans la Lune* (*Voyage to the Moon*), says [Discover](#) in an online article. Stop-motion photography showed their space capsule landing in the eye of the face of the moon—one of the earliest uses of this form of animation. The first great iconic movie scientist was C.A. Rotwang, who built an electrically animated female robot in Fritz Lang's 1926 silent masterpiece *Metropolis*. Rotwang's shock of unruly hair, white lab coat and maniacal eyes made him the prototype for the mad movie scientist, while his black-gloved prosthetic hand became a motif used in many films, most notably in . . . *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bomb*, which was the longest title of any film ever nominated for the Best Picture Oscar. For more 'scientific' movie gems, visit <http://72.32.189.109/web-exclusives/20-things-movie-scientists/>



### **Want to join SCANZ?**

If you have a special interest in communicating science and subscribe to the objectives of the organisation you are welcome to join. Current members include working journalists, public relations professionals, academics, science festival organisers, museum directors, policy advisers, students, scientists and researchers, and science leaders.

And perhaps it's time to renew your membership. If you wish to attend the forthcoming conference at the member rate of \$150, you should renew your membership at the same time.

The membership fee for 2007-08 is \$80 (\$32 for full-time students).

Download the registration form from the SCANZ website (<http://www.scanz.co.nz>) and send the completed form together with your cheque to SCANZ, PO Box 12-276 Wellington. If you'd like a receipt, please enclose a SAE.

### **Updates for web**

If you have something that you'd like publicised earlier than the next newsletter, please send item to Nancy de Bueger at <mailto:Nancy.deBueger@frst.govt.nz> and we will add it to the events section of the SCANZ website

### **Want to get in touch?**

Peter Burke, President

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Nancy de Bueger, Secretary/Treasurer

<mailto:Nancy.deBueger@frst.govt.nz>

Kim Griggs, Newsletter Editor

<mailto:kim@griggs.net>



### **Next newsletter**

We'll be in touch again after the SCANZ conference in June in Wellington. Come along to the conference and support *your* organisation.