

Te Mana Tangata Whakawhanake
MacDiarmid Institute
Advanced Materials & Nanotechnology

Three of our entrepreneurial researchers – along with an affiliated company – are amongst the [finalists in the 2025 KiwiNet Awards](#). [Professor Aaron Marshall](#), [Dr Michel Nieuwoudt](#) and [Dr Ben Mallett](#) are shortlisted for the KiwiNet Research Commercialisation Awards, together with start-up company [Zincovery](#) (which has both Aaron and alumnus [Jono Ring](#) as co-founders).



News and Updates

More success for [Advemto](#)

Continuing on this theme, congratulations to [Emeritus Investigator Professor Justin Hodgkiss](#) and his team on their [selection for the 2025 BioTools Innovator cohort](#). Check out start-up Advemto's video on YouTube [available via LinkedIn here](#), and 'like' it to help them win \$10K.



Cleantech Trek Christchurch

We partnered with [Ara Ake](#) and [ChristchurchNZ](#) to host 36 leaders - including start-up CEOs, banking executives and VCs - on [a learning tour of the companies scaling up cleantech in Christchurch](#), highlighting climate related innovation and start-ups in the cleantech space in Christchurch.

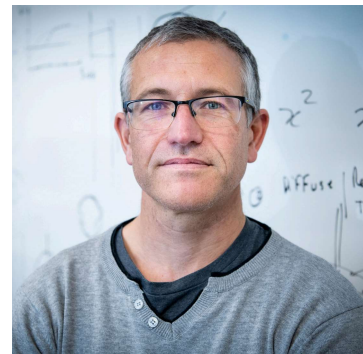


Welcome to our two newest governance Board members

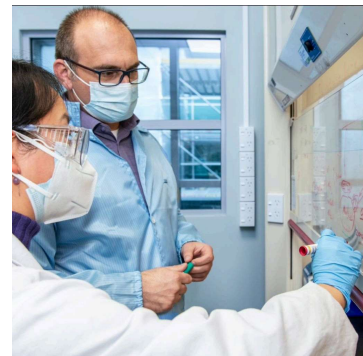
We welcome two new members to our governance Board: Professors [Lucy Johnston](#), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) from the [University of Canterbury](#), and [Sally Brooker](#) (Principal Investigator with the Institute) from the [University of Otago](#).



New Zealand Institute of Physics biennial awards
 Congratulations to [Emeritus Investigator Professor Eric Le Ru](#) who has been awarded the [New Zealand Institute of Physics \(NZIP\) Dan Walls Medal for 2025](#) for his world-leading research in surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy (SERS), plasmonics, single-molecule detection and electromagnetic scattering.



Congratulations also to [Principal Investigator Associate Professor Franck Natali](#), recipient of the [Te Tohu mō te Whaihua i te Mātai Ahupūngao – Physics Impact Award](#), presented by the [New Zealand Institute of Physics](#). This award honours an individual or team whose physics research delivers demonstrable benefit to Aotearoa New Zealand through commercial success, industrial uptake, or societal impact.



[Distinguished Alumni award for founder of OpenStar](#)

Alumnus [Dr Ratu Mataira](#) received a Distinguished Alumni award from [Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington](#) for his trailblazing work leading his start-up company [OpenStar](#).



Outreach Highlights



[Deputy Director Māori Associate Professor Pauline Harris](#) and [Kirsty Doyle](#) led a community-focused science engagement in and around Raetihi. The outreach team engaged with over 150 participants, including tamariki and rangatahi from local schools, as well as whānau and community members ranging from pēpi to kaumātua. A stand-out was the SMART Dome—an inflatable, mobile planetarium in which participants were taken on a guided tour of the night sky. This was in partnership with [Paihau — Robinson Research Institute](#).

[Deputy Director Outreach and Education Associate Professor Anna Garden](#) led a pop-up station on renewable energy at the [NZ International Science Festival](#)

in Dunedin, demonstrating wind turbines and solar panels, as well as showing off our rotating MOF model and making the ever-popular folding buckyballs and hydrogen fuel cell-powered cars, with kids as young as two (as well as "big kids"!) splitting water to make hydrogen and using this to race their own cars.

[Dr John Roche visit](#)

We welcomed [Dr John Roche](#), the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, into some of our labs to talk about emerging technologies in the Quantum and Advanced Materials space, and the development of the new [NZ Institute of Advanced Technology](#). One of our researchers made the surprising connection between ammonia fertiliser and quantum technologies: an example of serendipitous discovery in basic research leading to commercial impact in cleantech!



[Te wiki o te reo Māori 2025](#)

This year saw 50 years of Te wiki o te reo Māori. We're always keen to tautoko (support) our people's development with kupu (words) that relate to our science:

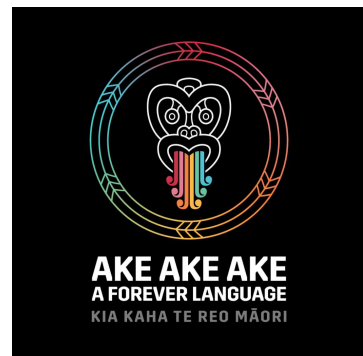
Matū (materials)

Rangahau (research)

Taiwhanga pūtaiao (science laboratory)

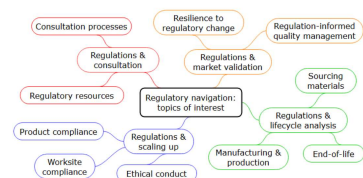
Kaipūtaiao (scientist).

For your learning journey, explore reomaori.co.nz — it's packed with guides, assets and pronunciation help.



[New Regulatory Navigation resource on the MI website](#)

A new Regulatory Navigation resource on our website brings together real-world examples of regulation-related challenges faced by local start-ups, emphasising the importance of regulatory planning when scaling up from the lab to the market. The case-study format enables entrepreneurs who are new to any regulatory requirements to learn from others who have



faced these for the first time when building a startup.

Collaborating for Climate Resilience and Space Innovation

[Kirsty Doyle](#) and [Associate Professor Pauline Harris](#) met [Dr Hugh Mortimer](#) at RAL Space and [Andy Shaw](#) ([Assimila](#)) part of the [Rutherford Appleton Laboratory \(RAL\)](#), the UK's national lab for space science. Assimila uses Earth-observation data to support decision-making in agriculture, land management, and climate resilience. Hugh generously hosted the team at the [Harwell Space Cluster](#).



Recent Media

[Principal investigator Professor Michele Governale](#) and [Emeritus Investigator Professor Uli Zuelicke](#) teamed up to write this article for [The Conversation on 'Spooky action at a distance'](#) – a beginner's guide to quantum entanglement and why it matters in the real world.



[Associate Investigator Dr Michel Nieuwoudt](#) spoke with [RNZ Saturday mornings about her start-up company Luminoma and skin cancer diagnosis](#).



The Science Media Centre collected some commentary on the new research funding changes [here](#); [Director Professor Nicola Gaston](#) contributed a few thoughts alongside others.

Alumnus [Dr Ratu Mataira](#) spoke with [RNZ about nuclear fusion and the ambition of Openstar](#).

KiwiNet finalist [Associate Investigator Dr Michel Nieuwoudt](#)'s start up [Luminoma was featured in the NBR](#).

[Associate Investigator Dr Paul Hume](#) has written an article for [The Conversation on the need for New Zealand to up our solar power use](#).

Other articles of interest:

Further reading:

- Measuring the climate performance potential of startups – a climate VC's perspective of this challenging but useful approach <https://www.worldfund.vc/knowledge/measuring-the-climate-performance-potential-of-startups>
- Carta commentary and data on [bridging rounds for startups](#)
- Report by Greenhouse (Sydney) on Catalytic capital [Catalysing Climate Capital: Unlocking Investment for Australia's Climate Tech Future](#)

Does New Zealand punch above its scientific weight? [This report](#) suggests so, and as Sir Peter Gluckman says in the preface "This timely report provides important insights showing how effective and efficient the science community has been, despite comparatively low funding levels".

Thank you for your support of and interest in the MacDiarmid Institute – we can't wait to share more news with you as the year goes on!



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