



**OTAGO INSTITUTE
FOR THE ARTS AND SCIENCES**

December 2017

President's Report
Prepared by James Scott

Thank you to all the Otago Institute council members for helping run a successful 2017 program. I would also especially like to acknowledge Ian Hall's support of post-graduate travel awards, and all those people who either joined or renewed their membership.

COUNCIL

The council underwent fairly major reshaping at the end of 2016. Fede Balthar, Anna Garden, Oana Jones, SungYong Lee, Robert Morris, and Ting Wang joined the committee. Anna has been the 2017 membership secretary, Oana has been the Dunedin Astronomical Society representative, Robert has been the Otago Museum representative and Ting has been the Otago Institute secretary. Existing members have been David Ciccorrico, who also took up the position of Otago Institute representative on the Otago Museum Trust Board, Sharon Dell (council member), Kim Hageman (immediate past president), Ilona Kokay (vice-president), Kourken Michaelian (council member), James Scott (myself, as president), and Brendon Woodford (treasurer). Fede retired early in the year to take up a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship and it was decided that there were enough current members to cover his absence. I am pleased to report that the council has closely matched male:female and sciences:arts ratios. I thank all these council members for their contributions this year; it has been a pleasure to work with such an active and motivated group.

For the make-up of the next year's committee, I will put a nomination forward to remain as president. Further nominations are Anna Garden for vice-president, Ting Wang for secretary, and Brendon Woodford for treasurer. Kim Hageman is stepping down to take up an academic position in the United States. I wish her the best of luck and I thank her for her guidance over the last year and support of the Institute. Additional council nominations for 2018 are very welcome.

COUNCIL PERSPECTIVE

It has been our goal this year to raise the profile of the Otago Institute. This has, I feel, been achieved in part:

- Mainly, this has been achieved through close collaboration with the Otago Museum, with whom we share a Memorandum of Understanding. By drawing on Otago Museum and Royal Society membership mailing list, as well as our new Facebook and Twitter sites, we have been able to advertise our events much more widely than has been achieved in the past. I especially wish to acknowledge the support of Rachel Cooper from the Otago Museum for helping make the events run smoothly, and Anna Garden and Kourken Michaelian from the Otago Institute for arranging advertising.
- Another strategy has been to run two post-graduate travel award events (instead of one), with the aim of raising the profile around the University. Kourken Michaelian has been instrumental in running these events.

We still struggle with membership, which is unfortunate since this is where the OI mostly draws monetary support for the Postgraduate Travel and Aurora Science Fair awards as well as other small costs. Therefore, I thank the current membership and I hope that you have managed to keep up to date with events using the new digital mediums that have been put in place. A website rejig is planned early next year. Further strategies for raising the profile are planned for 2018 but, in any case, we hope to have begun to build momentum with this year's programme.

AWARDS

The Otago Institute Postgraduate Travel Awards were offered to help young researchers finance their travel overseas for conferences and visits with collaborators. The event was run once mid year, and then once in October. The winners were:

- The 2017 round 1 first prize was to Nick Shields (Pathology) for "Living drugs: Harnessing the power of T-cells to combat cancer".
- The 2017 round 1 second prize was to Chloe Wall (Philosophy) for "Knowing (from) me, knowing (from) you: Are memory and testimony analogous?"
- The 2017 round 2 winners (equal) were Adam Denny (Physiology) for "High-density lipoproteins - more than just the good cholesterol" and Jason Lew (Physiology) for "An exercise a day, keep the heart disease away! Is it true?"

Without Ian Hall's support, running two events would not have been possible.

We continued to sponsor the Premier Otago Institute Prize at the Aurora Otago Regional Science and Technology Fair. The prize went to Rebekah Lynch for her project entitled '*Anabolic Supplements: the protein shake for plants*'.

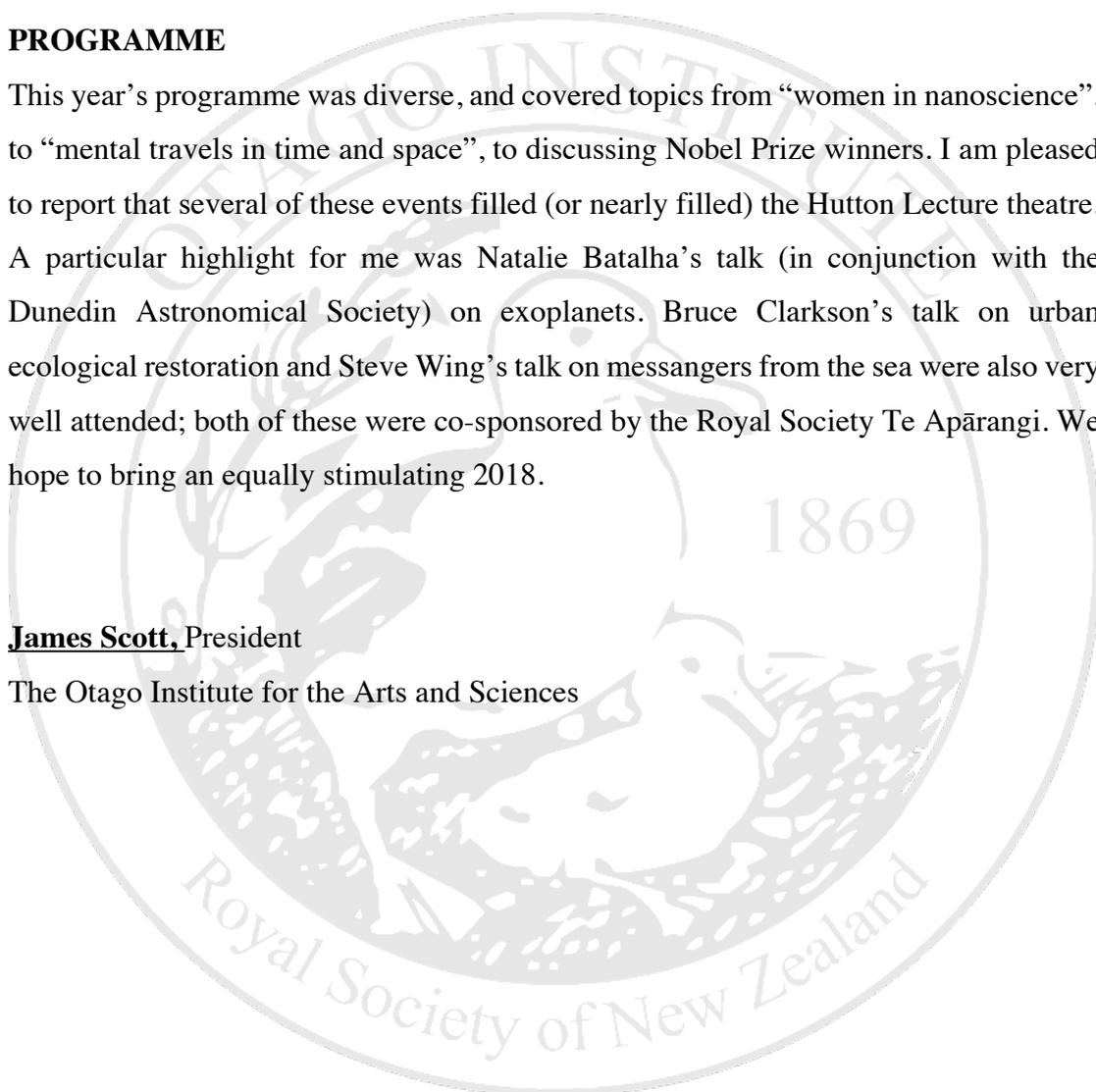
We will also select a prize winner for the Otago Institute Best Honours Thesis Award for 2017.

PROGRAMME

This year's programme was diverse, and covered topics from "women in nanoscience", to "mental travels in time and space", to discussing Nobel Prize winners. I am pleased to report that several of these events filled (or nearly filled) the Hutton Lecture theatre. A particular highlight for me was Natalie Batalha's talk (in conjunction with the Dunedin Astronomical Society) on exoplanets. Bruce Clarkson's talk on urban ecological restoration and Steve Wing's talk on messengers from the sea were also very well attended; both of these were co-sponsored by the Royal Society Te Apārangi. We hope to bring an equally stimulating 2018.

James Scott, President

The Otago Institute for the Arts and Sciences



LECTURES & EVENTS

We hosted and co-hosted a diverse set of public lectures and events during the past year, as outlined below.

Month	Date	Event	In conjunction with
April	12th	Hochstetter Lecture Dave Crow: Tectonics and genetics in topographic evolution	Geoscience Society of NZ
May	11th	Charles Fleming Lecture Bruce Clarkson: Urban ecological restoration: the new frontier?	Royal Society Te Apārangī
May	19th	Post-graduate Travel Awards	
June	22 nd	NZ Rutherford Lecture Michael Corballis: Mental Travels in Space and Time	Royal Society Te Apārangī
July	20 st	The Otago Institute presents... what's hot	
August	3 rd	Royal Society 150th event Steve Wing: Our changing oceans: how animals bring us messages from the sea	Royal Society Te Apārangī
August	31 st	Election Special	University of Otago: Peace and Conflict Studies
September	21 st	Editing our Genes	Royal Society Te Apārangī
September	27 th	Women in Nanoscience: Little Materials, Big Stories	University of Otago Department of Chemistry, MacDiarmid Institute
October	19 th	Beatrice Tinsley Lecture Natalie Batalha: A planet for goldilocks	Dunedin Astronomical Society
October	7 th	Postgraduate Travel Awards Round 2	
December	7 th	Inside the Nobel, AGM	