

# Introduction



## Strengthening Communities through Research

After another successful year for research at Wintec, it is pleasing to reflect on the past twelve months, to celebrate our successes and to focus ahead on areas we plan to progress further. Our goal at Wintec is to build a stronger community through education, research and career development. Education is our core service so it can be easy to overlook the part that research plays in our organisation and also in the community. Through the 'Mainstreaming Research at Wintec' project last year we set in motion many new processes. These resulted in efficiency and accountability improvements in research, capability building, revenue generation, and in promoting Wintec's research interests and collaboration with external agencies. We place a high value on staff engaging in research because of its fundamental contribution to the quality of their teaching. The new processes have also helped to nurture a culture of research among staff, so that they recognise and contribute to Wintec's research environment.

We are extremely pleased these changes have found excellent favour with staff and there has been noticeable enhancement of the research culture at Wintec. Wintec was one of the first Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) to commit to the PBRF process and this has been reflected in the following key achievements from last year:

- Our Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) quality score increased by 28% since the last PBRF round in 2003 - this means that the quality of the research we are undertaking has improved significantly. We have also experienced a 55% increase in ranked researchers since 2003 - so more of our staff are engaged in research that meets national and international standards.
- Out of 10 participating ITPs we ranked first for our research in two subject areas - Māori Knowledge and Development; and Music, Literary Arts and Other Arts. We also ranked second for our research in Management, Human Resources, Industrial Relations and Other Businesses; Sports and Exercise Sciences; and Visual Arts and Crafts. The Ministry of Education's current Tertiary Education

Strategy outlines a new tertiary education system, detailing the expected contribution of tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and the priority outcomes they expect. The Tertiary Education Commission has been progressively introducing various elements of this new system, including a much stronger focus on the quality and relevance of education and research outcomes. The new system also emphasises the need for ITPs to increase the transfer of knowledge and technology to industry, business and community groups, to act as a regional facilitator and to become increasingly involved in developing stronger research links between tertiary education institutes, crown research institutes and business. Wintec is in a strong position to take on the role of providing applied research linkages to create regional economic opportunities. One of the shifts, among many others, required to achieve this potential is increasing involvement in evidence-based technology development and transfer. Our main focus for the coming year will be technology transfer to the regional community, while our overall goal continues to revolve around undertaking research projects that will contribute to the regional and national economy, as well as enabling staff to promote Wintec as a relevant, credible and quality place to study. Among the many benefits of our various research projects is the ability to help the community through the sharing of knowledge. Wintec staff are researching real topics that are relevant to everyday life and can be readily applied to the different industries operating within our region and nationally. Through our research, we aim to contribute to up-skilling today's youth, including those already in the workforce, and to make a real contribution to enhancing our community's resourcefulness. In this publication we have highlighted a number of such research projects in the 'feature articles' section and a full list of research outputs, peer esteem and contribution to research environment is also presented. We are proud that we have once again over-achieved our research weighted output target in 2007. Congratulations to our researchers for this excellent achievement.

We have done things a little differently this year with the research register publication being partially designed and produced by third year communication and media arts students. Journalism students Nakita Wairepo, Aaron Goile, Aden Morunga, Amanda Wisnewski and Courtney Mellor have written the articles about the various researchers while a photography student, Kimberley Farthing, has provided pictures. It has proved to be a worthwhile exercise for these students to engage in learning skills that can be applied in the workforce. It has also been a great opportunity for these students to get to know the researchers and understand the various objectives they are aiming for here at Wintec. We are looking forward to an exciting year in Wintec research and thank all the researchers in advance for their commitment and contribution toward meeting our 2008 targets.

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