

## \$2.3m HRC grant for AUT

AUT University's National Research Centre for Stroke Applied Neurosciences and Neurorehabilitation (NRC-SANN) has received \$2.37 million from the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) to conduct the world's largest population-based Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) incidence and outcomes study here in New Zealand.

The three-year study will quantify the national incidence of TBI and provide crucial background information for evidence-based health care services including rehabilitation, resource planning and evaluation of effects of preventative and management strategies for TBI in this country.

The funding is the largest single grant awarded to AUT University for any one study and Professor Valery Feigin, director of NRC-SANN, says this highlights the importance of unearthing a clearer understanding of TBI in this country.

"TBI is one of the leading causes of disability and death in New Zealand and has a significant impact not only on the individual, but also on immediate and extended family, friends and society."

"Accurate information about the true extent and nature of the problems is lacking both in New Zealand and internationally."

"Study findings will contribute considerably to the international body of knowledge in this area."

The study will examine the burden of TBI across gender, age and all ethnic groups found within the study population area of Hamilton and the Waikato District, thus addressing disparities (such as gender, ethnicity) which are known to exist in recorded TBI cases.

The research team will also rely on the support of ABI Rehabilitation Management Ltd, who has provided a research fellowship, The Laura Ferguson Trust, Brain Injury Association of New Zealand, ACC and other health care providers to deliver and implement its findings.

"We have the chance to improve the quality of life for thousands of TBI survivors and their family caregivers in New Zealand," says Professor Feigin.

"As well as potentially saving the country millions in the provision of health care to TBI sufferers."



One of the new lecture theatres on the North Shore Campus

## New Facilities for AUT

A burgeoning student population at AUT's North Shore Campus is driving the development of new facilities including two large theatres which seat 150 and 300 people. The same building boasts an open foyer space for exhibitions, conferences and external events and a large, north-facing courtyard. Pro-Vice Chancellor, North Shore, Max Abbott says the building work continues around the campus to ensure the facilities are fit for purpose and support best practice standards of learning, teaching and research.

## AUT CELEBRATES SPORTING PROWESS

AUT University students clinched the two top awards at this year's NZU Blues Awards.

The Supreme Award - NZU Sportsman of the Year went to business student and Kiwi League star Jerome Ropati and the NZU Maori Sportsman of the Year went to communications student and Paralympics gold medallist swimmer Cameron Leslie.

Ropati (featured below) was one of eight finalists in the Supreme Award category which also included fellow AUT students Leslie and surf life saver and current world record holder Michael Buck.

Mt Albert resident Ropati says he is pretty excited about the win as it is the first major academic award he has ever won. A key player in the Warriors drive to the 2008 finals, he is well remembered for his game winning try in the final of the Kiwis' 2008 World Cup campaign.

Ropati began his two-year diploma in 2007 alongside fellow Warriors Louis Anderson, Todd Bryne, Nathan Fien, Micheal Luck, Simon Mannering, Grant Rovelli and league icon, Warriors development coach Tony Iro.

AUT tailored the diploma programme to fit in with the players' demanding training schedule and classes were taught at Warriors HQ, Mt Smart Stadium in Auckland.

Ropati says he used down-time to study, adding that taking papers like marketing has given him a deeper understanding of how sportspeople's behaviour impacts on their team's image.

"We've looked at how people perceive us, such as the public, media and shareholders, and it has helped us

manage how we act," he says.

Paralympics athlete Leslie was awarded the NZU Maori Sportsman of the Year award in a category dominated by AUT student athletes, with Black Ferns Teresa Te Tamaki and Football Ferns Emma Kete also nominated.

Fellow student Shannon Foreman was awarded the Distinguished Performance Award for his outstanding display in kickboxing, an award for athletes who compete in sports currently unsanctioned in New Zealand.

Bruce Meyer, sport development manager at AUT puts the university's success down to its unique programmes and committed staff who prepare student-athletes for life after sport, while still allowing them to pursue their sporting goals.



A new North Shore Campus lecture theatre/convention centre complex was opened this month. Accommodating over 500 and including a large foyer for exhibitions, dining and entertainment, this state of the art facility will be a boon for University and wider community functions. It is set in a landscaped precinct, Awataha Plaza, named to reflect a strong connection with the adjacent Marae. Officially opened by Hon John Carter, other



speakers included Vice Chancellor Derek McCormack and Awataha Marae kaumatua Dr Arnold Wilson. The opening was a great event with original performances by AUT dance students and time to socialise with members of the University community and invited guests. The Dean's Winter Lecture Series commences on 21 July when Richard Hall will speak on 'Afghanistan: Health and Development Challenges'. The next two lectures will be given by Waitemata DHB Senior Medical Officer Dr Johan Rosman ('Organ transplantation in New Zealand: a panacea?') and AUT 'squidman' Dr Steve O'Shea ('The marine environment: Economic compromises in conservation'). Interested members of the community are welcome to participate - and take the opportunity to join us on the North Shore and City campuses.

Max Abbott, Pro Vice-Chancellor, North Shore

## Enrolments now open

Places are still available to start 20 July, 2009 in Health Sciences - Applied Mental Health, Nursing, Psychology and Health Promotion majors.

For details visit: [www.aut.ac.nz/midyear](http://www.aut.ac.nz/midyear)

Health Sciences

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