



## Money not the key to Kiwi happiness, but it's a start

Money may not buy happiness but material conditions are a significant factor in determining quality of life, according to a visiting academic.

Speaking at the 2010 Quality of Life Conference held at AUT, Bath University's Professor Suzanne Skevington said material conditions have a substantial impact on quality of life and this has implications for decisions about social policy.

Professor Skevington also discussed the 24 aspects that have been identified as important to people's quality of life world-wide by the World Health Organisation's Quality of Life (WHOQOL) Group.

The aspects include sleep and rest, self-esteem, mobility, sexual activity, home environment and personal beliefs and come under the six broad domains of quality of life: physical health, psychological, level of independence, social relations, environment and spirituality.

She said international findings

about the impact of material conditions on quality of life have implications for social policy in New Zealand directed at certain age and ethnic groups traditionally in lower income brackets.

Skevington's presentation traced the path of nearly two decades of research initiated by the WHO to better assess quality of life in diverse cultures, resulting in the WHOQOL scale which now exists in 50 languages.

"What people believe to be a good quality life varies between cultures, and between social groups within them," said Skevington.

"Delivering a good quality of life has become a key goal of contemporary health care for health professionals and policy-makers but prior to the introduction of the WHOQOL measures its definition and assessment has been something of an enigma."

"Even now [quality of life] is still often confused with standard

of living, life satisfaction, and subjective well-being."

AUT University's Professor Rex Billington has established the New Zealand branch of WHOQOL and begun identifying the factors that are particular to New Zealanders' quality of life.

A survey released last year indicated 86% of Kiwis were happy, (New Zealand General Social Survey, 2009), but Professor Billington says the WHOQOL scale assesses satisfaction in the different dimensions people consider important to the quality of life which are "not necessarily the things politicians and government officials consider important".

Other speakers at the Quality of Life conference included the University of Melbourne's Professor Graeme Hawthorne and University of Auckland's Professor Glynn Owens.



## AUT opens Manukau campus

AUT University is building on its ties in South Auckland with the introduction of a Manukau Campus this year.

This month the campus, located on the former Carter Holt Harvey site on Great South Road, opens its doors to more than 400 students.

Many of these students will be studying papers from degree programmes also offered on AUT's North Shore Campus including

midwifery, education, sport and recreation, physiotherapy, podiatry and oral health.

In their second semester some of the students will shuttle from the Manukau Campus to North Shore for some papers.

The new campus builds on existing AUT University partnerships in the Counties Manukau region including education and resource sharing with Bruce Pulman Park, Middlemore Hospital, the Counties Manukau District Health Board and Enterprise Manukau.



AUT University Manukau Campus

The impact of new and emerging technologies on gambling and gambling-related harm was the main focus of an international gambling think tank that took place at AUT last month. Attracting a host of international speakers and guests, the think tank set the scene for the International Gambling Conference 2010 and collectively they addressed some of the more critical issues facing the estimated 50,000 New Zealanders who experience significant gambling-related problems. New Zealand is known to be a world leader in the gambling field, being the first to introduce a comprehensive public health approach to gambling, and both events highlighted opportunities for New Zealand to maintain this leadership profile.



Delivering a good quality of life has become a key goal of contemporary Healthcare for health professionals and policy-makers worldwide. Recent international findings in this area were addressed at the AUT-hosted Quality of Life Conference which also took place in February. The university used the occasion to unveil a set of New Zealand-specific assessment tools, developed in conjunction with the World Health Organisation Quality of Life Group, for use by local practitioners.

Both events signal AUT's ongoing contributions to the research and debate of critical issues that can progress New Zealand's social and healthcare policies.

**Max Abbott, Pro Vice-Chancellor, North Shore**

## Welcome and congratulations

To all new and returning students in the fields of Health Sciences, Education, Sport and Recreation.

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

Enrolments are now open for Semester 2, 2010