

# INAUGURAL PROFESSORIAL ADDRESS

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES 2019

# AUT



PROFESSOR  
MATTHEW  
RYAN

## An Economic Theorist In The Age of Big Data

The world is awash with data, and social scientists are particularly drenched. What is the role of a pure theorist, armed only with logic, in this data-centric environment? If you want to see the world in granular detail, or even to forecast the future, a wealth of data is a fine thing. But if you want to understand the world, it is important to view data through a theoretical lens. Decision theory builds structures with which to organise data on human behaviour. Data also has an internal logic of its own, and readily misleads those who fail to appreciate that logic. In this inaugural professorial address, Professor Ryan will discuss the value of mathematical decision theory to

empirical social science by illustrating some “data illusions” and their logical resolution. The discussion will centre on the use of Big Data by algorithmic decision tools.

Professor Ryan was educated at the University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington and Yale University. His research is predominantly in decision theory. This is an interdisciplinary field encompassing economics, psychology and mathematics; Professor Ryan has published in all three areas. He is an Associate Editor of the Journal of Mathematical Economics. Prior to joining AUT in 2014, Professor Ryan held positions at the University of Auckland and the Australian National University.

TUESDAY  
27 AUGUST

4.30–5.30pm

WG308 (Te Iringa, Wave Room)  
AUT City Campus  
55 Wellesley Street East  
Auckland 1010

To register for this event,  
please [CLICK HERE](#)

Refreshments will be served after  
the address.

