

INAUGURAL PROFESSORIAL ADDRESS

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES 2018

AUT



**PROFESSOR
MICHAEL
PETTERSON**

Planetary Health and Geology: How do Rocks and People Connect?

We have one earth, aged 4.5 billion years. Geology illuminates space-time processes, explaining Earth-evolution. 'Reading rocks' requires the acquisition of many skills & 'languages'. For most 'earthlings' this activity appears eccentric and remote. And yet, a deep understanding of earth processes is critical to planetary health, life-quality, & development. Humans are so numerous and consuming that a new Geological Epoch has been proposed: 'The Anthropocene'. The application of geoscience to real-world human challenges (e.g. resources, pollution, living space, disasters) requires innovative thinking. Professor Petterson presents 'experiments' in diverse places such as Afghanistan, the Himalayas, & the Pacific Islands, linking rocks and people in intriguingly unexpected ways. How can volcanic rocks assist with nuclear waste storage & community attitudes? How can rocks bring peace to Afghanistan? How

does sand inform the survival of low-lying atoll islands? If rich, well regulated countries, say 'no' what is the wider impact for the poorer world? This lecture explores how under-valued multidisciplinary research that combines science and social science is fundamental to the future health of earth, it's people & wildlife & it's existence as we know it.

Professor Michael Petterson became AUT's first Professor of Geology, joining the School of Science in April 2017. He is from the coalfield villages of Northeast England and gained his BSc and PhD at the University of Leicester, UK. He has mainly worked outside of universities and held positions of Assistant Director at the British Geological Survey, and Director of The Geoscience Division, SPC (Suva, Fiji), as well as applying geoscience in numerous international settings. He brings this experience to the setting up of a new Geology Major at AUT, and research in geoscience and development locally and globally.

**TUESDAY
1 MAY**

4.30-5.30pm

WA Conference Centre
AUT City Campus
Level 2, WA Building
55 Wellesley Street East
Auckland 1010

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Refreshments will be served
after the address.

