

Report on: “Our Changing World in the South Pacific: Australasian and German Perspectives”

17th Biennial Symposium of the Australian and New Zealand Associations of von Humboldt Fellows

The 2017 Australia-New Zealand Humboldt Kolleg was held in Wellington, New Zealand, from 17-19 November, 2017. The venue was the building of the Royal Society of New Zealand. The meeting was jointly organized by the Australian (AAvHF) and New Zealand Associations of von Humboldt Fellows. The organizing committee of six included one nominee of the AAvHF.

Participants

The 93 Kolleg participants covered a broad range of disciplines, including a wide representation of Australian and New Zealand academics. Of these, 55 were Humboldtians, 28 from Australia and 27 from New Zealand; 25 were new-and-emerging researchers and potential Humboldt applicants; three were distinguished invited guest researchers from Germany.



Dr Katrin Amian (centre) with some of the Australian delegates at the 17th Biennial Symposium. (Photograph courtesy Trevor Finlayson.)

There were ten other participants, including Dr Anna Bauer (DAAD Representative in New Zealand), Dr Eckart Bierduempel (Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft), Dr Christian Kahnt (Director of the Goethe Institute, Wellington), and Dr Katrin Amian representing the Humboldt Foundation.

Theme of the Conference

The theme was to consider our changing world in the South Pacific and in particular to address how we face the manifold challenges of the future. Topics explored included the following:

- How do we tackle the impact of climate change on fragile ecosystems and economies?
- How do we prepare for aging societies with associated illness?
- How does science help with addressing health and dietary needs of society?
- How do we support the humanities, literature and blue-sky research against relentless commercial pressures?

The Opening Ceremony

After a short cultural event, the meeting was formally opened by Dr Andrew Matthews, President of the New Zealand Humboldt Association; and by Professor Gabrielle McMullen, President of the Australian Association. Delegates were also welcomed by Mr Gerhard Thiedemann, German Ambassador to New Zealand; Dr

Margaret Hyland, Chief Scientist; and Dr Katrin Amian.

Academic Program

The overall theme was framed by inviting the following plenary speakers:

- Professor Juliet Gerrard (Chair, Marsden Council of New Zealand): “How Do We Support ‘Blue-sky’ Research Against Relentless Commercial Pressures?”
- Professor Christopher Kellett (University of Newcastle): “Valuing Carbon Emissions: Models and methods for the social cost of carbon”
- Dr Dave Lowe (MBIE Coordinator for New Zealand – Germany Science Innovation Relationship): “The Science and Technology Agreement 40 Years On: A model for cooperative success between countries”
- Professor Laura Parry (University of Melbourne): “Enhancing Research Translation From Knowledge Gained Through Scientific Investigation”
- Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond (University of Auckland): “Exploring Science in the Pacific”

The academic program also featured three 30-minute talks given by our German visitors. From 24 proposals, the program committee chose 12 carefully selected 15-minute talks contributed by delegates, serving both as introductions to their research and contributing broadly to the overall theme.



Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM being presented with a Distinguished Member Award by Ambassador Thiedemann. (Photograph courtesy Trevor Finlayson.)

The program on Saturday afternoon highlighted the work of new-and-emerging researchers: five were invited to present their work; another five presented posters which were displayed for the weekend.

The final lecture of the meeting, delivered by Professor Gabrielle McMullen, marked the recent death of Dr. Heinrich Pfeiffer, the much-loved former Secretary General of the Humboldt Foundation.

The General Meetings of both the Australian and New Zealand Associations of von Humboldt Fellows were held immediately after the close of the formal academic program at lunchtime on Sunday.

Program and Presentation

The detailed program of the oral presentations and a list of the posters are given in Appendices I and II, respectively. A published e-Book, entitled “Our Changing World in the South Pacific: Australasian and German Perspectives” ed. Trevor R. Finlayson ISBN 978-0-9588149-4-2 (Australian Association of von Humboldt Fellows, 2018) which resulted from the peer-reviewed manuscripts submitted following the Humboldt Kolleg, can be accessed on the website of the Australian Association of von Humboldt Fellows at: www.humboldtaustralia.org.au on the menu item “Publications”_17th Biennial Symposium.

The Science and Technology Agreement

2017 marked the 40th anniversary of the Science and Technology Agreement between

Germany and New Zealand. This event was noted and celebrated in the lecture given by Dr Dave Lowe, the coordinator for the New Zealand – Germany Science and Innovation Relationship.

Social Events

On Friday evening, the German Ambassador, Mr Gerhard Thiedemann, hosted a reception and buffet dinner for participants and guests at the Ambassador's residence.

The Saturday evening Kolleg dinner was held at the “Icon” restaurant, part of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

The Australian Association presented the Peter Schwerdtfeger Award for an Early Career Researcher to Dr Glen Wheeler (University of Wollongong), and Distinguished Member Awards to Professor Allan Bretag (University of South Australia) and Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM (Mary Aikenhead Ministries and formerly of the Australian Catholic University).



Dr Glen Wheeler receives the 2017 Peter Schwerdtfeger Award from Ambassador Gerhard Thiedemann. (Photograph courtesy Trevor Finlayson)

Professor Kate McGrath, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) of Victoria University, Wellington, delivered a humorous and much appreciated after-dinner speech on the contentious subject of “Can PBRF, International Rankings and Talk of Impact be Good for Research?”

Promotion of the Activities of the Humboldt Foundation

Dr Amian gave a very-well received 30-minute presentation on the activities and programs of the Foundation. There was excellent engagement between Humboldtians and new-and-emerging researchers, with many of the latter commenting how rewarding they found the experience of participating in the meeting.

Funding

We are most grateful to the Humboldt Foundation for its sponsorship of the Kolleg. We also acknowledge the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE); its sponsorship allowed us to guarantee funding to support the participation of 25 new-and-emerging researchers.

Prepared by Eamonn O'Brien
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On behalf of the organizing Committee:
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John Hearnshaw (University of Canterbury)
Andrew Matthews (AM-NZ)
Barry Scott (Massey University)

22 November 2017

Appendix I – Humboldt Kolleg Program

Friday, 17 November, 2017

1400–1500 Registration

1500–1540 Official opening of Kolleg with remarks by:

- Gerhard Thiedemann, German Ambassador to New Zealand;
- Margaret Highland, representing MBIE;
- Chairs of the Australian and New Zealand Associations of von Humboldt Fellows.

1545–1630 Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond (University of Auckland): “Exploring Science in the Pacific”

1645–1715 Dr Dave Lowe (MBIE Coordinator for New Zealand – Germany Science Innovation Relationship): “The Science and Technology Agreement 40 years On: A model for cooperative success between countries”

1730–1800 Professor Christopher Kellett (University of Newcastle): “Valuing Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Models and methods for the social cost of carbon”

1900–2100 Reception hosted by Ambassador Thiedemann at his residence

Saturday, 18 November, 2017

0900–0930 Professor Kai Matuscheski (Humboldt University): “Crossing Boundaries: a joint Australian-German PhD program on malaria research”

0935–0950 Professor Murray Hamilton (University of Adelaide): “The Makeup of Southern Ocean Clouds”

0955–1010 Dr Jeroen Schillewaert (University of Auckland): “Exceptional Symmetries and Their Applications”

1015–1030 Professor Murray Cox (Massey): “The Past and Future of Genomic Health in the Pacific”

1030–1100 Morning Tea

1100–1130 Professor Laura Parry (University of Melbourne): “Enhancing Research Translation from Knowledge Gained Through Scientific Investigation”

1135–1150 Professor Nail Akhmediev (Australian National University): “Extreme Events and Their Mathematical Description”

1155–1210 Professor Peter Lockhart (Massey University): “Science for Sustainability in Oceania”

1215–1400 Lunch

1400–1415 Professor Nicola Gaston (University of Auckland): “Putting the Humanity(ies) in Science”

1420–1435 Dr Peng Du (University of Auckland): “Gastrointestinal Electrophysiology in Digestive Health and Disease for Aging Societies”

1440–1455 Melissa Ridgway (Australian National University): “Why a Cure for Malaria Isn’t Enough”

1500–1515 Dr David Eccles (Malaghan Institute): “Private Sequencing in a Public World: The disruptive reality of nanopore sequencing”

1515–1530 Dr Anita Perkins: “Mobility and German Travel Writers of the Saddle Period”

1530–1600 Afternoon Tea

1600–1630 Professor Juliet Gerrard (Chair of Marsden Council of New Zealand): “How do We Support ‘Blue-sky’ Research Against Relentless Commercial Pressures?”

1630–1700 Dr Katrin Amian: “Introduction to Humboldt Programs”

1700–1730 Professor Gerold Schneider (Hamburg University of Technology): “Bioinspired Hard and Damage Tolerant Materials”

1900–2200 Dinner at ICON Te Papa, including after-dinner speech by Professor Kate McGrath, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) of Victoria University Wellington

Sunday, 19 November, 2017

0900–0920 Dr Anne-Sophie Jürgens (Australian national University): “So-Called Experts? Knowledge Credibility in Fiction”

0920-0935 Professor Jeffery Malpas (University of Tasmania): “Australian Politics and University Research”

0935–0950 Professor Allan Bretag (University of South Australia): “The German Contribution to the Development of the Intracellular Glass Micropipette Electrode”

0955–1010 Dr Paul Jerabek (Massey University): “Is Element 118 a Rare Gas or Not?”

1015–1030 Professor Tim Mehigan (University of Queensland): “A General Secretariat of Precision and Soul: Thinking with the humanities after the fourth revolution”

1030–1100 Morning Tea

1100–1130 Professor Zoya Ignatova (University of Hamburg): “Viewing Diseases Through Translational Lens”

1135–1150 Dr Glen Wheeler (University of Wollongong): “Curvature Flow, Blood Cells, and Bushfires”

1155–1210 Professor Motohide Miyahara (University of Otago): “Empathy, Disability, and Accessibility”

1215–1230 Professor Gabrielle McMullen (Mary Aikenhead Ministries): In Memoriam of Dr. Heinrich Pfeiffer

1230–1400 Closing remarks followed by lunch and General Meetings of Humboldt Fellows Associations



Professor Allan Bretag being presented with his Distinguished Member Award by Ambassador Thiedemann. (Photograph courtesy Trevor Finlayson.)

Appendix II – Poster Presentations

Associate Professor Trevor Finlayson (University of Melbourne): “Observations of Environmental Changes in the Antarctic Region”

Dr Nathan Kilah (University of Tasmania): “3D-Printed Mounts for Crystal Structure Analysis”

Dr Ben Mallett (University of Auckland): “Superconductor Sandwiches: when mad ideas pay off”

Nira Paskaranandavadivel (University of Auckland): “Ambulatory Gastric Mucosal Slow Wave Recording for Chronic Experimental Studies”

Dr David Yost (Federation University): “Counting Faces of Polyhedra”