

Comment from the President



Here at Waikato, we recently held the annual Open Day (targeted at secondary school students) and a Community Open Day to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the University. At events such as these, it is always gratifying to see people's engagement and delight in chemistry, whether it be using liquid nitrogen to freeze foliage, "flashes and bangs" or something as simple as a magnetic stirrer in a large flask of fluorescent solution. Simple dem-

onstrations such as these seem to entertain young and old alike. It is a shame that the general public perception of chemistry is not always so positive! One of the things that always surprises me is how non-scientific people are fascinated by something as simple as a rotary evaporator! Blasé to us but we all have our own chemical delights. For me, it may be an aesthetically pleasing NMR spectrum while to others it may be a crystal structure or a particularly elegant calculation!

I would like to draw the attention of members to the Prime Minister's Science Prizes. These are New Zealand's pre-eminent annual awards for excellence in science (prize money totals \$1 million) and aim to raise the profile and prestige of science in New Zealand. The prizes include the following:

The Prime Minister's Science prize: To an individual or team who has made a transformative discovery or achievement in science that has had a significant impact on New Zealand, or internationally

The Prime Minister's MacDiarmid Emerging Scientist prize: To an outstanding emerging scientist undertaking research for a PhD in New Zealand, or within five years of the

date of the award of their PhD

The Prime Minister's Science Teacher prize: To a teacher for outstanding achievement in teaching Science

The Prime Minister's Science Media Communication prize: To a practising scientist who is an effective communicator; this prize provides them with an opportunity to further develop their knowledge and capability in science media communication.

The Prime Minister's Future Scientist prize: This prize is automatically awarded to the Supreme Award recipient from the Royal Society of New Zealand's 'Realise the Dream' competition for outstanding achievement in carrying out a practical and innovative research or technology project.

The prize round closes on **4 August**. For more information or to enter, go to www.pmscienceprizes.org.nz

The recent budget actually held some good news for science and education. For the tertiary sector, \$83.3 million was allocated to lifting tuition subsidies in disciplines including science (8.5% increase), agriculture (8.5% and selected health sciences (pharmacy 16.4% and physiotherapy 12.4%). An additional \$53 million over four years was also allocated to establish another three Centres of Research Excellence (CoREs), which will bring the total number to ten. Details of these and other initiatives can be found on the website www.beehive.govt.nz

Finally, I hope that everyone took a few minutes to complete the recent short survey on the current format and content of *Chemistry in New Zealand*. The results of this survey will be made available when they have been analysed fully.

Michèle Prinsep
NZIC President

From the Editor



Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the *Chemistry in New Zealand* reader survey and particularly those who provided thoughtful feedback and comments. As the survey was still open as this issue went to print, a summary of the results will be published in the October edition of the journal.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my career as a chemist has been working alongside colleagues who are passionate about their job, who bring their enthusiasm for science to the lab and the lecture room, and who inspire the next genera-

tion of young people. I recently came across this wonderful cartoon by Nick Kim (<http://www.lab-initio.com/>) which reminded me of why I chose the career pathway I did.

Of course there are many times when experiments go wrong, papers are rejected, funding proposals are declined and yet more changes or cuts are made in the science sector, provoking feelings of cynicism and despair with "The System". However, I hope we are all helping to promote the same eagerness and excitement in our undergraduates, new postgraduates and early-career researchers that will lead them to pursue a satisfying and ultimately rewarding career in chemical science that many of us currently enjoy.

Catherine Nicholson
Editor

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Eagerness

A dangerously maladaptive emotional affliction that results from insufficient experience. *Antidote:* more experience.

Warning: eagerness among scientists is a sign that you should leave the room.



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