

EDITORIAL

JIM McALOON

Two years ago my predecessor as editor, Peter Whiteford, wrote of the ‘serious financial challenges that are being faced right now’ in Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington and in other universities. While some universities report budget surpluses, the position of the humanities and social sciences, and some other disciplines, remains fragile, to use no stronger a word. Readers will be aware of the serious pressures in the public sector as well, notably the loss of jobs at the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. In the end all these crises are driven by government policy.

In such a climate, the Stout Research Centre continues to do what it was established to do: facilitate, encourage, and engage in research and programmes that focus on New Zealand Studies, often with interdisciplinary perspectives.

Michael Brown was the JD Stout Fellow in 2023 and we publish here his Stout Lecture, delivered towards the end of his time as Fellow. His lecture traverses the history of New Zealand music in the internet age, especially through the case of Wellington musician Luke Rowell.

Road safety is a contentious issue at present, whether relating to speed limits, orange cones or cycleways. Alex Trapeznik and Austin Gee’s article brings to light the debates of an earlier time and the reader might think that intemperate language around the topic is nothing new.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi is likewise a focus of debate, especially in light of current attempts to roll back a good deal of whatever effect has been given to it by government. Samuel Carpenter’s article advances an argument about how the two documents – te reo Māori and English – might be read together. Jamie Ashworth’s article explores the impact of colonisation on Māori ownership and use of forests in Wairarapa, and Māori efforts to defend their rangatiratanga and customary use in the nineteenth century.

William Ball Sutch remains a fascinating, perhaps enigmatic figure in New Zealand’s intellectual and political history. Russell Campbell’s paper is an exercise in detective work relating to Sutch’s doctorate.

Jared Davidson’s essay combines a rethinking of a classical theme in social theory – the meaning of class, especially in the Marxist tradition – with some reflection on his earlier work on Nelson, and a suggestive preliminary discussion of rural incendiarism in the late nineteenth century – that is, the deliberate burning of crops as a form of protest and retaliation against grievance.

This issue of the *Journal of New Zealand Studies* appears slightly later than we would have wished (partly because of the constraints alluded to above), and I am very grateful to contributors and readers for their patience, as well as to reviewers of articles and of books, to reviews editor Steven Loveridge, and to the Centre’s administrator, Debbie Levy for everything that has gone into producing this issue.

Jim McAloon.