In this issue

For a considerable period the central theme of Geoffrey Chambers', Hisham Edinur's and Paul Dunn's research has been the development and application of molecular methods to measure genetic variability in Māori and Polynesian populations.

Their paper, *New insights into ancestry and health of Polynesians and New Zealand Māori,* describes their experimental work on blood groups and the immune system markers HPA, HLA and MICA, and most recently KIR, as it relates to the early migration of people in Island South East Asia and Near and Remote Oceania. Their research, they argue, also demonstrates the reliability of current genotyping platforms that would well suit the new era of personalised medicine and DNA-tailored healthcare.

It is conventionally thought that New Zealand's distance from the large, northern hemisphere centres of learning, and our relatively small population and wealth, are detrimental to the contribution we can make to the advancement of scientific knowledge. In *New Zealand's size and isolation can stimulate new science,* Philip Yock argues to the contrary.

In his paper, Philip describes the role New Zealand researchers have played in, for instance, the hunt for extra-solar planets using gravitational microlensing, the nature of the strong nuclear force, and ideas that subsequently surfaced in the current Standard Model of matter. He also touches on the successes of the Geothermal Institute at the University of Auckland and posits that the Antarctica affords the New Zealand astronomical community with possibly the best site on earth for astronomy.

In November 2015 the Government asked the Productivity Commission to investigate how trends in technology, internationalisation, population, tuition costs and demand for skills may be used in models of tertiary education. The inquiry was to consider how New Zealand's intuitional and policy settings help or hinder the adoption of new models of tertiary education, as well as looking broadly across what exists now or what might emerge. The final report to Government is due 28 February 2017.

Wendy McGuinness' think piece, *The changing purpose of tertiary education,* explores how the tertiary education system could change in order to foster the development of skills that will be required of New Zealanders in the long term. The paper also formed the basis of a submission from the McGuinness Institute to the Productivity Commission.

Finally, on page 29 of this issue, mention is made of the Taxonomy Symposium held in April at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) science centre in Wellington to highlight taxonomic research and discuss, among other topics, how it affects New Zealand's economy. The Symposium was also an opportunity to celebrate the career of Dr Dennis Gordon, who has made significant contributions to the understanding of biodiversity in New Zealand and around the world. Dennis, a former NZAS Council member, recently retired from the Institute. With the assistance of Symposium co-organiser and NIWA taxonomist, Dr Daniel Leduc, we will be publishing a number of papers from the Symposium in an upcoming issue of *Science Review*.

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Editor