

HE HOKINGA WHAKAMURI REFLECTING ON 2023



2023 has been a year of change for Te Herenga Waka. It has not been an easy year for our institution but as our attention turns from financial sustainability to strategic choices for the future shape of this University, and the distinctive student experience we want to foster here, the Council is in good shape to support this work.

We welcomed a new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nic Smith, at the start of this year, as well as a number of new people to Te Hiwa, our leadership team, following a senior leadership team portfolio realignment.

It is great to have new expertise and energy to help move Te Herenga Waka forward. The Council has enjoyed a strong and positive relationship with Te Hiwa as we addressed challenges and positioned our University for a sustainable future.

I commend Professor Smith for his active, visible and principled leadership. Much has been achieved in his first year, and I know there is much more to come. Professor Smith led a thorough process to put the University in a position to return to financial sustainability, growth, and profitability.

Our University is strong and capable. It is full of talent. We can leverage this, and the ideas of our wider staff, student, and alumni communities, to ensure our future success.

It has been a difficult year for the whole university sector. All universities in New Zealand are facing financial headwinds and have had to make hard decisions in the face of underfunding of the sector over a long period. We are looking forward to working with the new Government to discuss the funding model for universities and tertiary institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand and how we can ensure the sector is fit for the future.

I want to recognise the constructive engagement we have had with both our unions and student leaders throughout 2023. It has added significant value.

I also want to recognise and acknowledge the enormous impact on staff who have been directly affected by the financial sustainability programme of work. As many of them leave the University, their contribution to Victoria, many over long periods of time, is greatly appreciated. I wish them well in the future. To the staff who remain,

I know that many are carrying heavy workloads to ensure the success of our students and they have my deep appreciation, as well as that of other Council members, for this effort.

I would also like to thank my fellow members of Council for the significant contribution they have made—their combined judgement, wisdom and insights have helped us navigate a challenging year. Thanks also to Nic Smith, other Te Hiwa members, and staff throughout the University.

We are now looking to the future. 2024 will see us establish a new strategic plan for Te Herenga Waka, and help move us forward.

John Allen
Chancellor