Our distinctive strengths

**Advancing better government**

In April, the Faculty of Law hosted the New Zealand Centre for Public Law’s ‘Government Law: Year-in-Review’ seminar, which sought to explain some of the key developments in government law over the past year and explore their significance for those working inside and outside of government. In November, the Political Science and International Relations programme hosted a three-day New Zealand Political Studies Association conference on the theme of ‘representation and responsibility’.

**Cultivating creative capital**

In November, Rachel Barrowman’s book *Creative Victoria: A History of 119 Years of Creativity at Victoria University of Wellington* was published by Victoria University Press to celebrate the University’s contributions to the cultural and creative life of Wellington, New Zealand, and beyond—in music, art, theatre, film, architecture, creative literature, and publishing.

**Enabling our Asia-Pacific trading nation**

The team leading the ‘Enabling our Asia-Pacific trading nation’ area facilitated an Asia-Pacific Spotlight Lecture Series in late 2018 featuring Victoria University of Wellington academics, government experts, and visiting international fellows speaking on topics including New Zealand Inc.’s trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific and ASEAN’s pivotal role in the region. All three sessions were well attended by business and government stakeholders, as well as university staff and students.

**Enhancing the resilience and sustainability of our national heritage and capital**

Four Victoria University of Wellington researchers were awarded Rutherford Foundation New Zealand Postdoctoral Fellowships for research that will be carried out with the University’s Antarctic Research Centre and School of Biological Sciences. The projects include research that looks at the role atmospheric warming has played in driving ice sheet retreat and Antarctic environmental change in the past, and a project that will map changes to New Zealand’s biggest glacier—the Tasman—using drones, satellites, and field observations.

**Enriching national culture**

Senior lecturer in Art History Dr Peter Brunt co-curated *Oceania*, the United Kingdom’s first major show to explore Oceanic art, at London’s Royal Academy of Arts. The exhibition was opened in September with an event attended by the Duchess of Sussex, and has received overwhelmingly positive reviews.

**Improving health and wellbeing in our communities**

The Faculty of Health was launched in 2017 and the first cohort of 125 Bachelor of Health students took their seats in the 2018 academic year. Of those students, 28 percent identified as Māori or Pasifika. More broadly, Victoria University of Wellington researchers from various faculties obtained more than $22 million in grants in 2018 for projects related to health and wellbeing, ranging from the Ferrier Research Institute’s work on developing new drugs and vaccines to combat malaria, to Faculty of Health researcher Dr Terry Fleming’s work on digital game-based mental health interventions for young people.

**Spearheading digital futures**

Launched this year by the University’s Wai-te-ata Press, ‘LitAtlas’ is a smartphone app that takes users on a stroll around Wellington’s waterfront in the virtual company of some of the country’s favourite writers using geo-location tracking, kinetic typography, and augmented reality. A collaboration between staff and students, the app connects landscape with technology and demonstrates how new media can reinvent digital space.

Senior Lecturer Dr Terry Fleming from the Faculty of Health is working on digital game-based mental health interventions for young people.

**Stimulating a design-led, high-value manufacturing region**

In September, the Faculty of Architecture and Design hosted ‘Manufacturing our Future’, a series of events that brought together internationally recognised experts and design leaders from around New Zealand. The series included two design exhibitions as well as public lectures and panel discussions on topics including New Zealand’s point of difference in design and new technologies within the Māori design environment.