

# THE ROOTS OF NATIVE LISTENING

IAN GORDON FELLOW PUBLIC LECTURE 2018

PROFESSOR ANNE CUTLER, MARCS INSTITUTE,  
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WELLINGTON

TE WHARE WĀNANGA  
O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



## WHY DO BABIES FIND IT SO EASY TO LEARN NEW LANGUAGES AND ADULTS FIND IT SO HARD?

Part of the reason has to do with how our brains become specialised in our native language. This specialisation makes listening to speech one of the most efficient operations of the human brain. But it also means our brain is not good at dealing with languages that don't fit native patterns. In this year's Ian Gordon Fellow Public Lecture, Professor Anne Cutler discusses how a baby's linguistic versatility becomes an adult's captivity in their native language, and the baby's effortless learning turns into the adult's annoying slog.

Professor Cutler is research professor in the MARCS Institute, Western Sydney University, and programme leader of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in the Dynamics of Language. Her research, summarised in her book *Native Listening* (MIT Press, 2012), centres on human listeners' recognition of spoken language and, in particular, how the brain's processes of decoding speech are shaped by language-specific listening experience.

Her work has been honoured with the Spinoza Prize of the Dutch Research Council and the ISCA Medal of the International Speech Communication Association, and she is a fellow of the Royal Society (United Kingdom), a foreign associate of the National Academy of Sciences (United States), and an elected member of six further scientific academies in Europe, the United States and Australia.

**WHEN** 6-7 pm, Tuesday 27 November 2018

**WHERE** Lecture Theatre 104 (HMLT104),  
Hugh Mackenzie Building, Kelburn Parade

To register to attend this free lecture,  
email [lals@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:lals@vuw.ac.nz) with  
'Ian Gordon Fellow' in the subject line or  
phone 04 463 5600, by Friday 23 November.

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