



# The MacDiarmid Institute

*for Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology*

Welcome to the first MacDiarmid Institute Alumni Newsletter!

2020 was an extraordinarily challenging year worldwide. It came as no surprise to us as directors of the Institute to find that in the midst of it all of this, the community that the MacDiarmid Institute has become was an amazing resource and support network.

And amongst the challenges, we've seen some success - we were [refunded as one of the Centres of Research Excellence](#) for \$48 million for another 7.5 years starting July 2021. We look forward to helping New Zealand navigate some of its biggest challenges of the next decade!

And that includes you – our alumni.

This newsletter is for you. It is a quarterly update of what we've been up to as well as a way for us to share with you jobs and events and opportunities to stay connected with the MacDiarmid Institute whānau. So please stay in touch - we'd love to receive feedback on what was and wasn't useful, and to hear if there's anything else MacDiarmid-related that you'd like to be kept up to date on. Please also forward this newsletter to other alumni you know.

## News and Updates



### [Alumni Business Scholarships](#)

Every year we offer a limited number of competitive scholarships for our alumni to undertake further postgraduate study in business-related areas. In 2020 we awarded four scholarships. Applications for 2021 will be advertised later this year, so keep an eye out on our website and social media.



### [Industry Advisory Panels](#)

We commenced an online platform for regular engagement between technology companies and our scientists in the form of Industry Advisory Panels. Each panel session hosts a company that is interested in pursuing research to overcome a technical challenge with commercial relevance. If you or your company is interested in being part of our Industry Advisory Panel, please contact [Kevin Sheehy](#).

### [Internships](#)

As you probably know, we offer internships to our affiliated graduates so they can experience working on real industry problems. We have a comprehensive network of companies, start-ups, NGOs and government agencies. If your company or workplace wishes to host an internship, please [contact us](#).



**techweek2021**  
22 – 30 May

### [Techweek](#)

MacDiarmid Techweek events titled "Deep Tech providing an economic boost for NZ" are happening in Christchurch and Wellington the week of 24-30 May - if you're keen to come along to one of these, please [contact us](#) and we'll add you to the invite list.



### [The Future of Work alumni events](#)

Our 'The Future of Work: Sustainability' event in Auckland in November 2020 was the second in our series of alumni events which launched in Wellington, 2019. If you would like to attend an alumni event, please [contact us](#) to be included in a future invite list.



### [MacDiarmid affiliated researchers win prizes 2020](#)

MacDiarmid affiliated researchers were awarded prizes from the [New Zealand Institute of Chemistry \(NZIC\)](#), two of our people won at the [KiwiNet Research Commercialisation Awards](#) and newest spinout company Zincovery won the [Callaghan Innovation C-Prize](#). Our researchers were also [successful in funding rounds](#).



### [Big waves bring kiwi home](#)

NanoCamp alumnus Dr Leighton Watson returns to Aotearoa as a recipient of a Rutherford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship to focus on the sound waves generated by volcanoes and how they can be used to monitor and mitigate the risk from volcanic activity.



### [MacDiarmid Symposium February 2021](#)

We were fortunate to be able to hold our Annual Symposium earlier this year as an in-person event in Rotorua, the first in-person event many of us had been able to attend for well over a year! The Mātauranga Māori Panel was one of the highlights with Māori collaborators and researchers filling up the stage, and a key takeaway being equal collaboration was necessary; Mātauranga Māori was not to be seen solely through a science lens, but rather the two knowledge systems must be understood together for a truly equitable approach.



## Recent media



### [Postdocs: the key to NZ's post-Covid recovery](#)

Co-Directors Nicola Gaston and Justin Hodgkiss write about funding postdocs to keep talent in New Zealand and elevate the economy.



### [Ten years on from Sir Paul Callaghan's 'Mapping Our Future'](#)

Co-Director Nicola Gaston and Deputy Director Geoff Willmott look at how far NZ has come. Together they explore the changes that have happened in science/innovation/tech ecosystems over the last decade.



### [Materials Fact or Fiction](#)

#### [- Rumpelstiltskin](#)

Principal Investigator and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Auckland, Duncan McGillivray tries to work out how Rumpelstiltskin made straw into gold.



### [The search for a better battery](#)

Alumna Dr Shalini Divya went on RadioNZ to talk about how she is starting a company to create the next sustainable aluminium-ion battery.



### [Canterbury University working on Covid-19 breath test to replace invasive nose swab](#)

A study, featured on One News, led by University of Canterbury researchers and including MacDiarmid researchers at Massey has shown a breath test may be able to detect Covid-19.

If you have something newsworthy coming up (a paper about to be published, job-related announcement, or anything cool your company is working on) and you'd like some help obtaining media around it, please email [Vanessa Young](mailto:Vanessa.Young@macdiarmid.ac.nz) (ideally before the publication or announcement – we're used working with embargoed content).



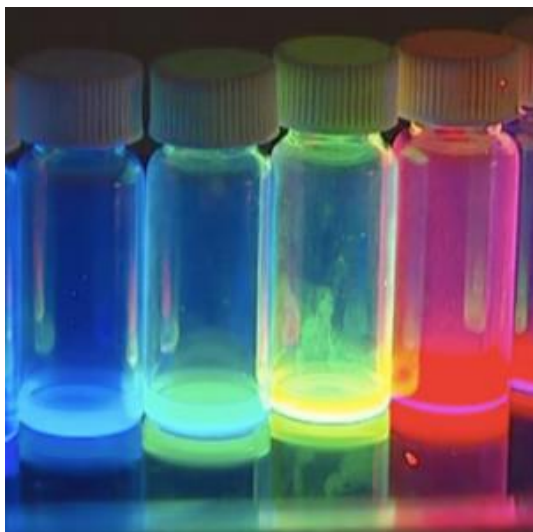
## Opportunities



### [MBIE Science Whitinga Fellowships for early career researchers](#)

Applications for MBIE's Science Whitinga Fellowship close on Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 5 PM (NZST). This Fellowship aims to support excellent early-career researchers who may otherwise be lost from the system due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their career path in any field at an eligible New Zealand research institution. The total value for the 2-year Fellowship is \$320,000 (excl. GST).

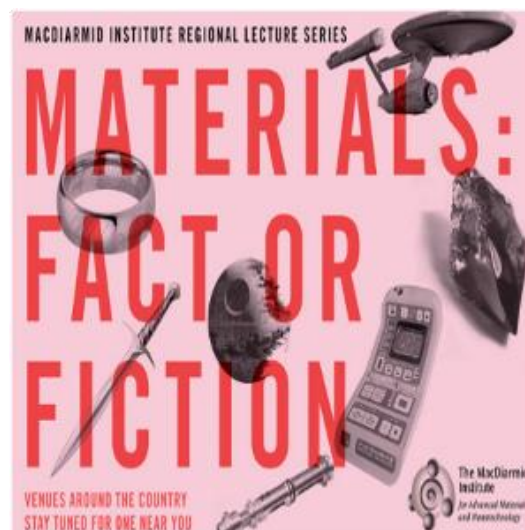




As you'll know from your time as a MacDiarmid student or early career researcher, we're always looking for volunteers to help with our educational outreach ([Regional Lecture Series](#), events organised through our [museum partnerships](#), and our [RNZ series](#) etc.) If outreach is your thing, and you'd like to stay involved with this, please [contact us](#).

### [2021 Rutherford Discovery Fellowships](#)

The 2021 Rutherford Discovery Fellowships application portal closes 29 April at 5 PM (NZST). These Fellowships support recipients for a five-year term with total funding of \$800,000 (excl. GST), developing future research leaders, and helping retain and repatriate New Zealand's talented early to mid-career researchers.



### [Anything to share?](#)

We'd love to celebrate your journey post-graduation. It helps us tell stories and paint pathways for secondary school students and others who are keen to see where science can lead them. If you would like to share with us your story or a recent discovery, achievement, media appearance etc. [Contact us!](#) We'll take care to only share where and how you'd like us to.

If you are a MacDiarmid alumni and have been forwarded this email by someone else and would like to join our quarterly alumni newsletter mailing list (and also hear of opportunities in between newsletters, e.g. jobs, and updates on the Techweek events etc.), please [contact us](#).

