



MEDIA RELEASE EMBARGOED 7TH September, 2022 at 5.30 pm

HONOURING DR TARA McALLISTER, FRESHWATER ECOLOGIST

Where: The Victoria University of Wellington Council Chambers in the Hunter Building at 5.30pm

This evening, Dr Tara McAllister, (Te Aitanga a Māhaki) a freshwater ecologist, is being honoured and presented with the prestigious Zonta Science Award bestowed on an emerging scientist. Professor Rawinia Higgins, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori) / Tumu Ahurei of Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington will welcome the guests to the ceremony.

Tara, during her eight years of study, has been mentored by both women and Māori scientists, an experience she says will enable her to provide support to the next generations of Māori and women scientists. Her research and efforts to improve inclusion and equity have added to the impetus for change in the research sector.

She has been outspoken in highlighting the under-representation of Māori and women in academia which has influenced practice and policy in the research sector. Tara has published 24 significant papers. In fact, she has collaborated on another research article including a recently published article in the Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand - "Seen but unheard: navigating turbulent waters as Māori and Pacific postgraduate students in STEM" (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

Tara's prize of \$25,000 as well as a Zonta Science Award special pounamu medal designed by jeweller Neke Moa will be presented by Dame Claudia Josepha Orange DNZM OBE, the distinguished New Zealand historian and a Zontian. The guest speaker will be Desirae Kirby, former Governor of Zonta New Zealand, who will speak on "Women in Science".

Dr McAllister has recently taken up a position as Research Fellow at Victoria University of Wellington in the Centre for Science in Society.

Her research provides a new focus on the global understanding of toxic blooms in rivers and has helped develop novel approaches to bloom mitigation and management. High-quality freshwater is a vital commodity and the deterioration in water quality at a time of increasing demand is a key global issue.

Tara has utilized Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in her research in Aotearoa and has contributed to a review of the challenges and solutions to managing underwater cyanobacteria (microscopic organisms found naturally in water that produce blooms and toxins) with collaborators from France and the USA. Tara's research has been incorporated into policy and she has worked alongside the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor in an internship.

"Receiving the Zonta Science Award is an immense privilege," says Tara, "It will provide the funds to visit Professor Kat Milligan-McClellan, an Indigenous woman scientist at the University of Connecticut to better understand how microscopic organisms and the toxins they produce affect

ecosystems. I will learn novel techniques to significantly advance understanding how blooms affect food webs and mahinga kai, the place and the resources gathered there”.

The Zonta Club of Wellington congratulates Dr Tara McAllister on winning this 17th Zonta Science Award and are extremely grateful to The Clare Foundation for their generous support. The Clare Foundation’s ambition of igniting impactful change for our people and planet is closely aligned to Zonta’s goals.



Dr Jan Pearson, Convenor Zonta Science Award, Dr Tara McAllister, Winner, Anna Jackson, President Zonta Club of Wellington.

END

Dr Jan Pearson

Convenor, Zonta Science Award 2022

Anna Jackson

President, Zonta Club of Wellington

For more information and interviews please contact:

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Dr Jan Pearson

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To view Album of previous Winners go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/ZontaClubofWellington>

Background on The Clare Foundation

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Through a proactive approach, Clare invests in ways that positively impact our environment, oral health, youth wellbeing and women, to create extraordinary change.

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