

# AUT gets ready to hit the catwalk

PHOTO: ERIN GAFFNEY / VANITY WALK



LOOKING GOOD: AUT fashion designers ready for their fifth ROOKIE fashion show.

By Lauradanna Radesic

AUT University's fashion and design school will soon be enjoying its yearly fashion fix as Air New Zealand Fashion Week gets ready to roll into town.

Thirty of AUT's fashion design students will participate in fashion week, as part of the ROOKIE fashion show.

Annabel McAleer, communications advisor for the faculty of design and creative technology, says Fashion Week provides a realistic experience for the students.

McAleer says the ROOKIE show is a fantastic opportunity for students to make a dramatic entrance into the fashion world.

"It's a lot like all the other fashion shows, there's really nothing different about it at all.

"Last year we had two of our students' collections picked up by the Australian boutique Blondie."

Gabrielle Muir, a current AUT fashion and design student, says the prospect of being chosen to be a part of the ROOKIE fashion show is exciting.

"It will be great to see our year's work up on the stage and see people's responses to it.

"It will be nice to get that feed-

back," she says.

Pieter Stewart, director of Fashion Week, says the ROOKIE show benefits the New Zealand fashion industry by showcasing the talent of our aspiring designers.

This year will be AUT's fifth showing at Fashion Week, now in its seventh year

**"It will be great to see our year's work up on stage."**

It has helped to significantly raise the profile of the New Zealand fashion industry in lucrative overseas markets.

Forty-two designers are scheduled to showcase garments from their 2008 winter collections during the week-long celebrations.

Designers include long-standing fashion icons like Karen Walker, Trelise Cooper and Hailwood.

It is estimated that fashion week is worth over \$23m to the New Zealand economy, with over \$19m of that coming directly into the Auckland economy.

Air New Zealand Fashion Week runs from September 16 to 22.

## Whanau room moves to ground floor

By Vaimoana Tapaleao

It was the end of an era and a new beginning for an AUT whanau room, as past and current students gathered to reminisce on old times and welcome a fresh start.

Te Whatu Manawa (the eye of the soul) whanau room was established in 1995 by a handful of Maori and Pacific Island communications students, who sought a place to meet and support each other.

Situated in prime real estate on the AUT Tower's 14th floor, the room needed to be moved to make way for refurbishments.

This provoked great opposition from both past and present students.

Founding member and now production manager at TV3's *Campbell Live*, Shannon Haunui-Thompson, says: "The first time I heard they were moving it I said, 'No! They can't move the room!'"

"But then I realised later how lucky we are to even have a room and at the end of the day, it is only walls. Rather, it's the essence and the spirit within the walls which make the room," she says.

Members from the AUT student alumni, staff faculty and current students, gathered to formally close the old room and

open the new one, situated on the tower's ground floor.

The evening was an emotional affair, as students and alumni told their individual stories of how the room was significant to them.

One current student and guardian for the room, Te Ataraiti Waretini, says the whanau room signifies both a stand and a drive for Maori and Pasifika students to do well in a mainstream world.

"I see the whanau room as a place where Maori and Pacific Island students can come together, offering each other guidance and motivation to succeed.

"Having the alumni there, talking about what the room was intended for in the first place gave us an appreciation for the room.

"Hearing about their experiences, you want to do even better, to keep the room alive."

Design and creative technology's equity and diversity co-ordinator Tui O'Sullivan says the speeches given by the student alumni reaffirmed the value of the room.

"There are only a handful of Maori and Pacific Island students here, scattered among the various faculties.

"To have a common meeting place gives them a shared understanding and a sense of kinship and belonging," she says.

## Learning: it's rubbish

By Justin Henehan

AUT University graduate Adam Buckingham is bringing rubbish back to early childhood education.

A former truck driver, Buckingham now specialises in Montessori early childhood education, where children learn through their senses and the environment.

"I wanted to bring real life objects into education," he says.

The father-and-son trip to the dump was at one time a New Zealand tradition. It was rare not to come away with something interesting to pull apart and

make go.

Noticing a lot of wasted materials going to the tip, and possibly drawing on a little dump-nostalgia, Buckingham started constructing activity centres for kids to play in and learn about how everyday objects work.

Buckingham's activity centres can be boats, cars, fire trucks or anything else. They are made from old desks and panel off-cuts and are covered in taps, light switches, springs and other bits and bobs for children to play with.

With the help of local businesses and a WasteWise grant from the North Shore City

Council, Buckingham has built more than 130 activity centres and prevented nearly three tonnes of rubbish going into city landfills.

For his efforts he was one of three finalists in the Auckland Regional Council's Sustainable Environmental Awards.

Buckingham builds the activity centres in his spare time and gives them away for free, but appreciates the donations that keep him building.

*Call the WasteWise fund co-ordinator on 486 8600 to discuss how the WasteWise Fund can help you and your community reduce waste today.*



PHOTO: DYLAN QUINNELL

HANDS ON LEARNING: Adam Buckingham, teaching young children through their touch and feel.