

University of Otago's 150th anniversary celebrations set to go

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Picnics, a regatta, concerts, parades, a rugby match, a dinner and a ball – an inclusive, colourful calendar of events is being planned for the University of Otago's 150th anniversary celebrations next year.

As the end of 2018 approaches, preparations for the anniversary are starting to ramp up. A list of key dates is being finalised and registrations for the Queen's Birthday Anniversary Celebrations programme will open in late January.

Kicking off with the traditional Burns Night Supper in January, followed by a Town and Gown, family-friendly picnic on the Clocktower Lawn on 15 February, the anniversary events are designed to bring together staff, students, alumni and the wider Otago community to celebrate New Zealand's first university, and its place at the heart of the region.



150th banners on campus

“Next year will be a special time for the University and the wider Dunedin community, as we celebrate the University's achievements and look to the future,” says Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement) Professor Helen Nicholson.

The picnic will be a carnival-like event, with lots of local music and children's entertainment. Time will be taken to reflect on the past, present and future of the University.

150th picnics around the world

Otago alumni will join together on 15 February to kick-off the 150th anniversary celebrations, with picnics in centres around New Zealand and around the world. Picnics will be happening in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Hong Kong, with plans afoot for more centres to take part. How about organising your own Otago alumni 150th picnic? Big or small, it's a great chance to get

together and celebrate our 150th anniversary. Don't forget to send us a photo on Instagram #Otago150 to let us know and to join in the celebrations.

Many of the celebrations are free of charge, and people are able to register for the individual events which appeal to them in the Queen's Birthday weekend programme.

Town and Gown will meet up again in March, with a lively street parade for all staff and students, collectively celebrating the diversity and cultures of the University.

The theme of the day will be colours and marchers will be encouraged to wear their academic colours and outfits of their clubs, colleges, regalia and international representation. Pipers, drums and brass will join the march from the Dental School to the Octagon, where entertainment and a variety of street food will be available.

April features The Science Teller Festival, with bestselling author Mary Roach and science writer Michael Shermer discussing the festival's theme "Science and the Afterlife".

The same weekend, the "Tally Ho! 3" concert will be "a celebration of the soundtrack of many of our lives through the 80s and 90s".

"Those cathedrals of sound from Dunedin bands we may have heard in the Union Hall at Orientation, rendered even more sumptuous by the Dunedin Symphony Orchestra and our world-famous singer/composers such as Martin Phillipps, Shayne Carter, David Kilgour, with special guest soprano Anna Leese," says Department of Music Senior Lecturer and musical director Dr Graeme Downes.



A postcard of the Clocktower as seen in 1906, care of the Hocken Collections

Queen's Birthday Weekend is the focus of the official celebrations, starting with the 150th University of Otago Exhibition at the Otago Museum, which will showcase the University's people, research, creative works and their benefits and influence on the global stage.

Saturday's events include the Academic Procession, the Official Convocation Ceremony, fireworks in the Octagon, and the Anniversary Dinner. On Sunday, there will be a service at Knox Church, residential college lunches and a Dunedin Town Hall Gala concert featuring "A Celebration of Otago in Music".

The concert features music with connections to the University, from the early days of the Department of Music right up to the present. Some of Otago's most distinguished musical alumni are coming back to Dunedin to take part, along with some bright young stars of the future.

The weekend wraps up with a rugby match at the University Oval and a Student Koneseti organised by the Pacific Islands Centre at the Dunedin Town Hall.

Later in the year, events include a nationwide Winter Symposium series from June to August, the Anniversary Gold Ball in August, the UNESCO Play Festival and an international rowing regatta at the end of September.

The theme of a Heritage Festival in September is "1869" and a play written for the anniversary will be performed in the Allen Hall Theatre.

As well as the events, a number of conferences and reunions will be held during the year.

The anniversary will also leave its own legacy in the form of a rose, a poem, a play and the 150th history book, "Otago, 150 Years of New Zealand's First University", written by Dr Alison Clarke, which will be launched in March (but is available to buy in December).

Further information on the events and registration can be found at:

- www.otago.ac.nz/150
- <https://www.otago.ac.nz/pacific-at-otago/pacific150/index.html>