



ASSOCIATE  
PROFESSOR  
SIMON MOWATT

MONDAY  
27 JUNE  
5.30–6.30pm

WG 404, WG Building  
AUT City Campus

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To register for this event,  
please [CLICK HERE](#)

Light refreshments will be  
served after the address.

## How did “Clean and Green” New Zealand lose the Organics race?

A study published 2011 argued that the image that New Zealand was ‘clean and green’ had been ‘naturalised into the collective psyche.’ ‘100% Pure New Zealand’ promotes the country’s unspoilt landscape on a global stage, drawing on a long tradition of positioning Aotearoa as a “natural wonderland” and the “paradise of the Southern hemisphere.” New Zealanders were involved with the pioneering development of organic agriculture with Rudolph Steiner, and were instrumental in the international spread of the concept, gaining board places on bodies such as IOFAM from their inception. In the early 1980s governments investigated the growth potential of the global organics market, which was anticipated to have massive growth potential and today has a value of US\$77 billion. With established agriculture and dairy export sectors, similar sizes and conditions, industry observers considered New Zealand and Denmark to have similar potential for growth and presumed that they would develop into strong competitors. But whilst Denmark became the world leader in organics, New Zealand’s production and consumption remained amongst the lowest in the developed world. Drawing on a joint project with Geoffrey Jones (Harvard Business School), archival material, interviews with entrepreneurs, business owners and social rebels, this talk examines how this situation arose, tracing how both countries mirrored each other’s developments until the 1990s, and how they diverged, leaving “clean green” New Zealand paradoxically as one of the least developed organic markets in the world.

Business historian Simon Mowatt is leader of the Business and Labour History Group of the Work Research Institute at AUT University, and he has been Visiting Fellow to the Centre for International Business History, Henley Business School. His historical research examines how companies respond to changes to technology and society, and with Howard Cox he recently published *Revolutions from Grub Street – a history of magazine publishing in Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

