

Professor Lisa Matisoo-Smith is a molecular anthropologist at the University of Otago, whose research focuses on biological anthropology and human genetic variation in ancient and modern populations, especially in the Pacific. She received her BA from UC Berkley and PhD from The University of Auckland. Lisa has lived in Hawaii, Japan, and California before basing herself in New Zealand. She joined Auckland University anthropology department just as DNA technology was developing and her initial research focused on the kiore, or Pacific rat, a hitchhiker that accompanied the first Pacific migrants to New Zealand. She was a principle investigator on National Geographic's Genographic Project and lead researcher for *From Africa to Aotearoa*, which looks specifically at human migration to New Zealand.

As Director of Allan-Wilson at Otago Research Theme, Lisa Matisoo-Smith's lab focuses on identifying the origins of Pacific peoples and their commensal plants and animals in order to better understand the settlement, history and prehistory of the Pacific and New Zealand. They utilize both ancient and modern DNA methods to answer a range of anthropological questions regarding population histories, dispersals, and interactions.

The Matisoo-Smith team is working on a range of projects funded by a variety of organizations, but the overarching research theme of the lab and the research group is Molecular Anthropology and Ancient DNA analyses. They have a purpose built, state-of-the-art ancient DNA laboratory, located in the University of Otago Richardson Building, as well as a fully equipped modern DNA lab in the University's Lindo Ferguson Building.

Matisoo-Smith became a Fellow of The Royal Society of New Zealand and in 2018 was awarded the societies prestigious Mason Durie Award for Social Science in recognition for her research into Polynesian migration across the Pacific. She is also a Fellow of Society of Antiquaries of London.

In 2012 Lisa Matisoo-Smith published her book '*DNA for Archaeologists*' and has extensively published scientific articles, many of which feature in high-profile journals including Nature and PNAS.