Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland

Design 101: Presentations, Posters, and PowerPoints for Researchers

June 30th 2026

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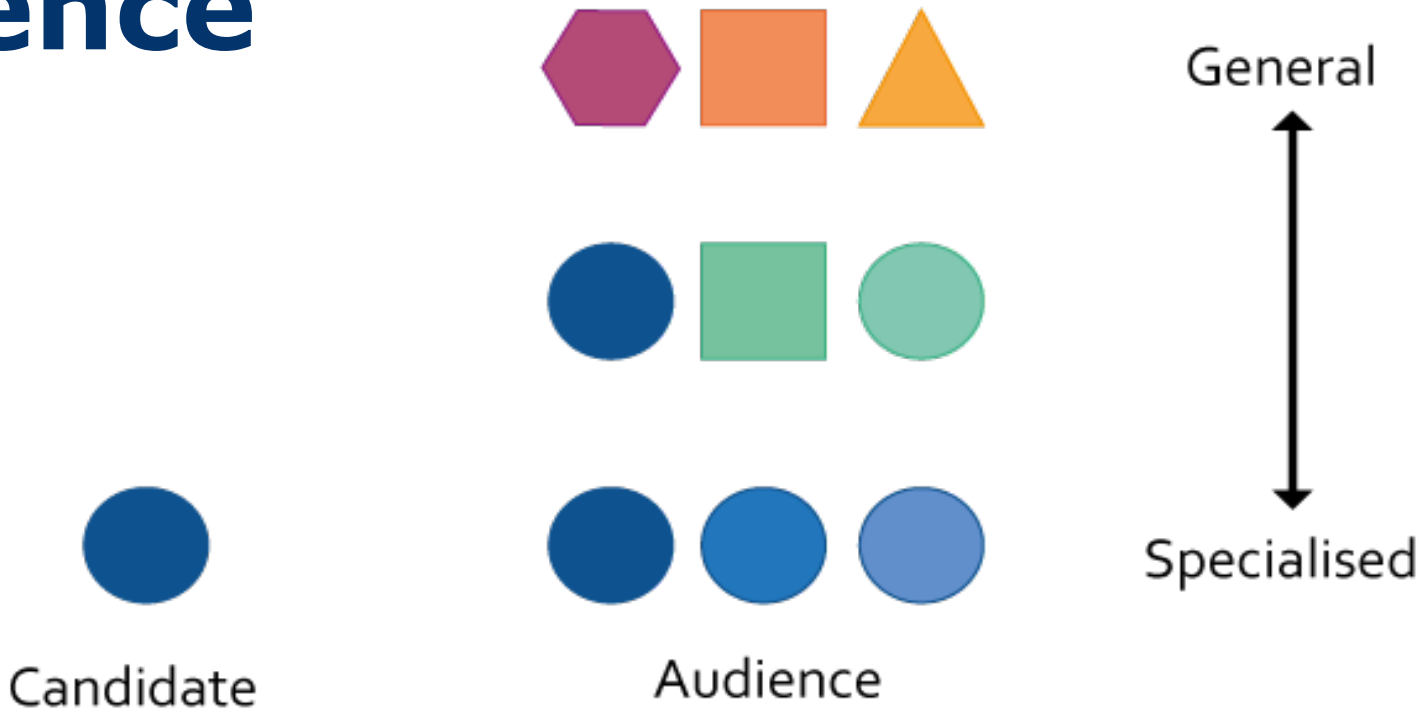
Why is design important to you?

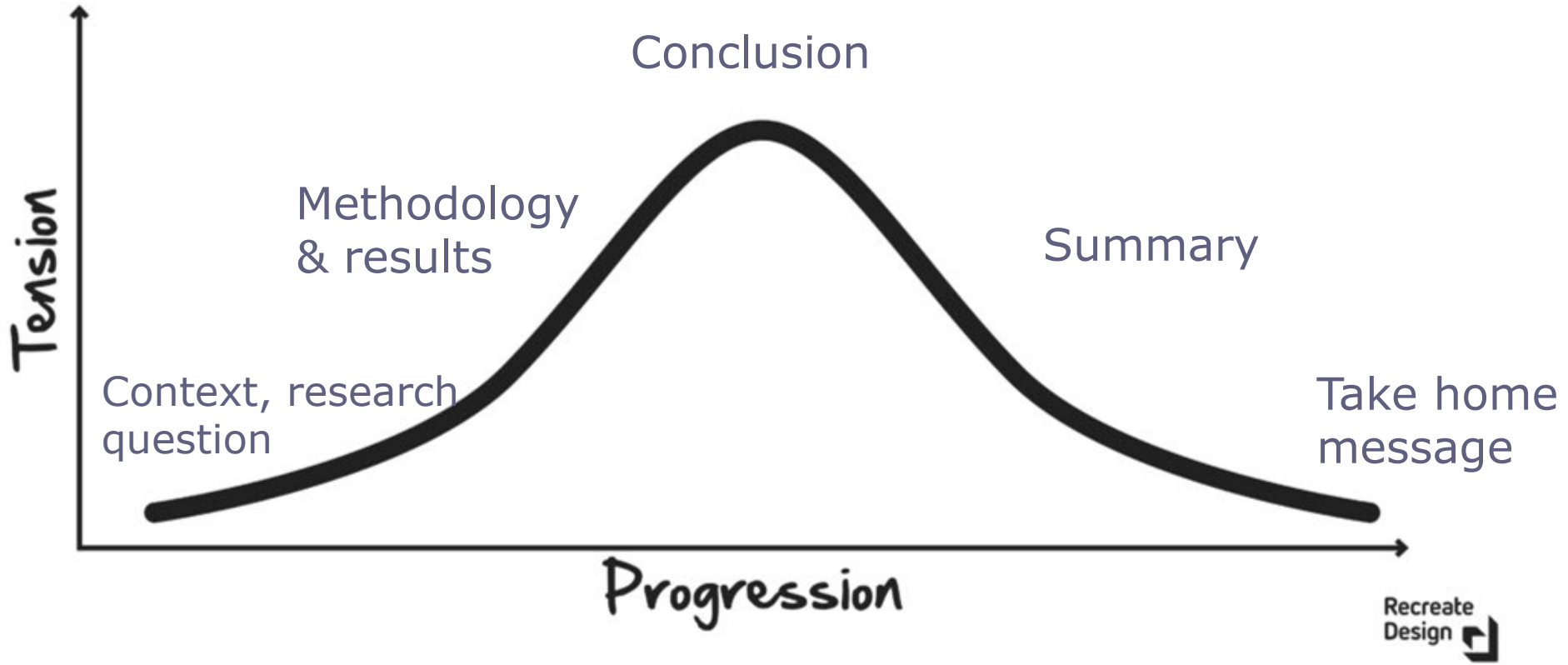
Know your audience

- Where will you use this?
- What are you trying to achieve?
- Who will see it?
- What do they already know?
- Why do they care?
- What's your **key message?**

Know your audience



Structure follows a narrative arc



Questions so far?

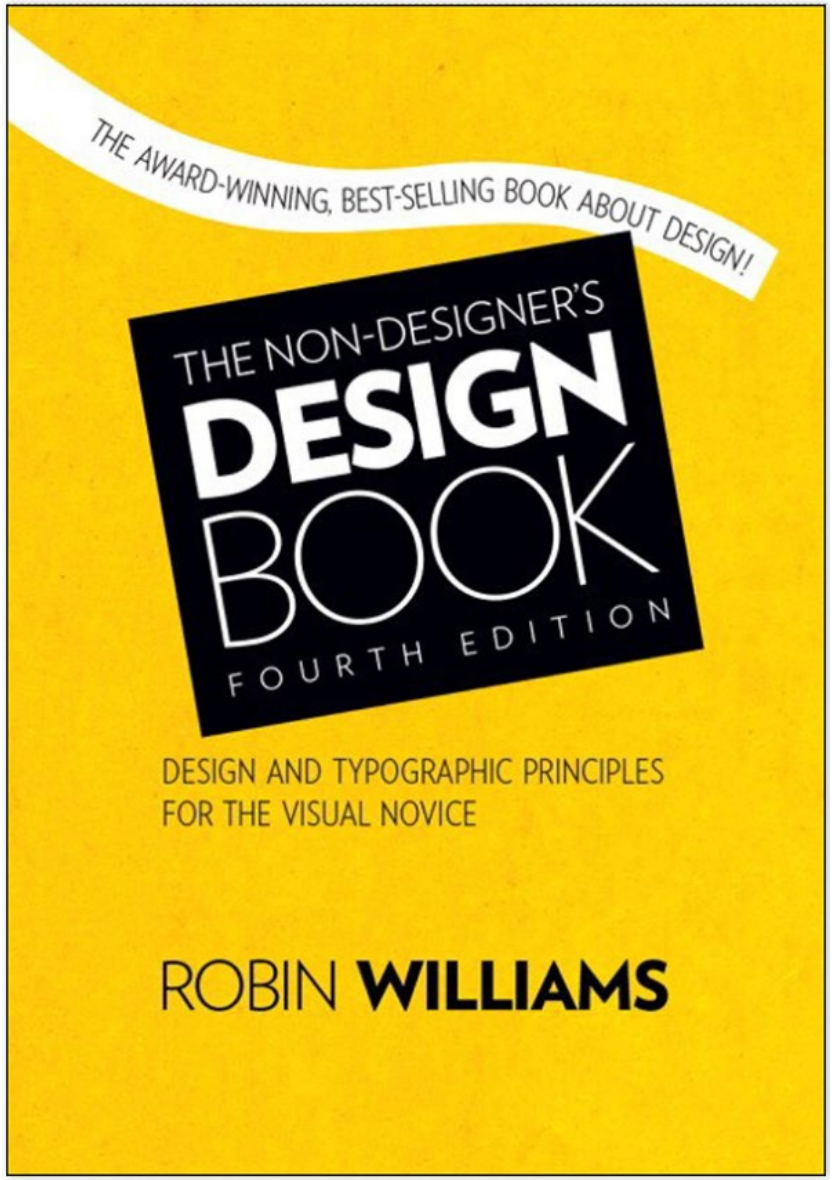
Basic principles of good design

Proximity

Alignment

Repetition

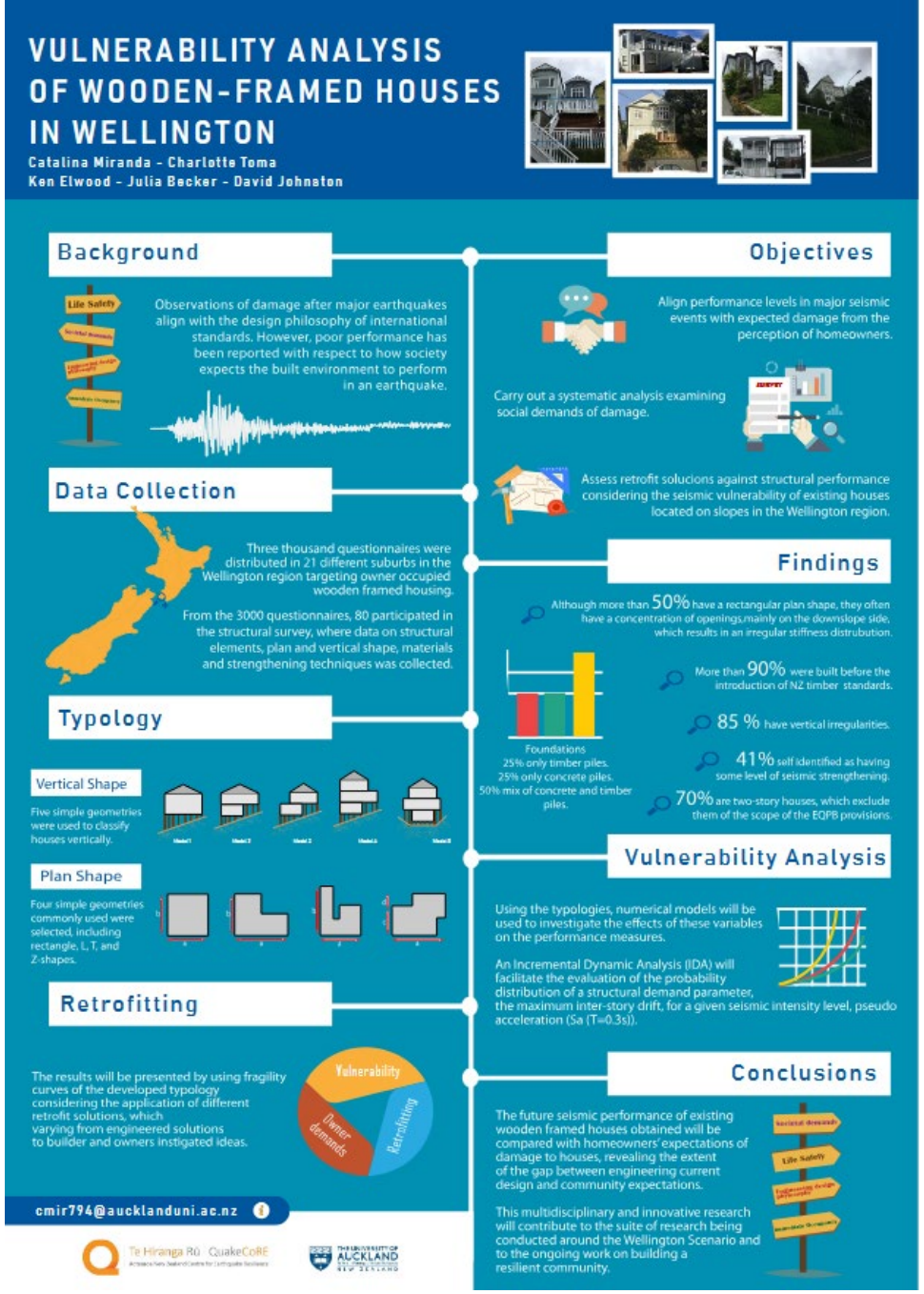
Contrast



- Williams, R. (2014). *The Non-Designer's Design Book* (4th ed.). Berkley, California: Peachpit Press

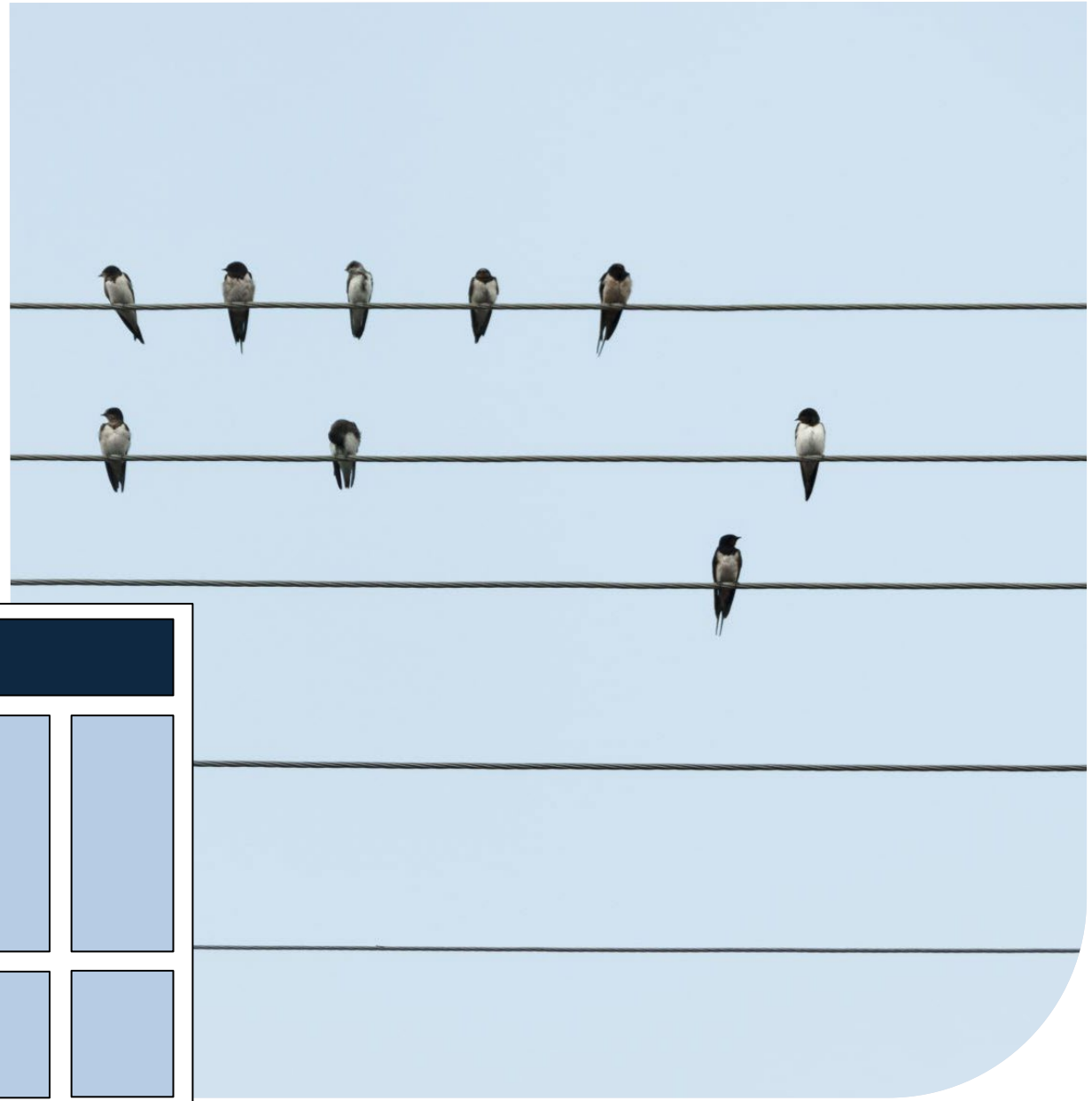
Proximity

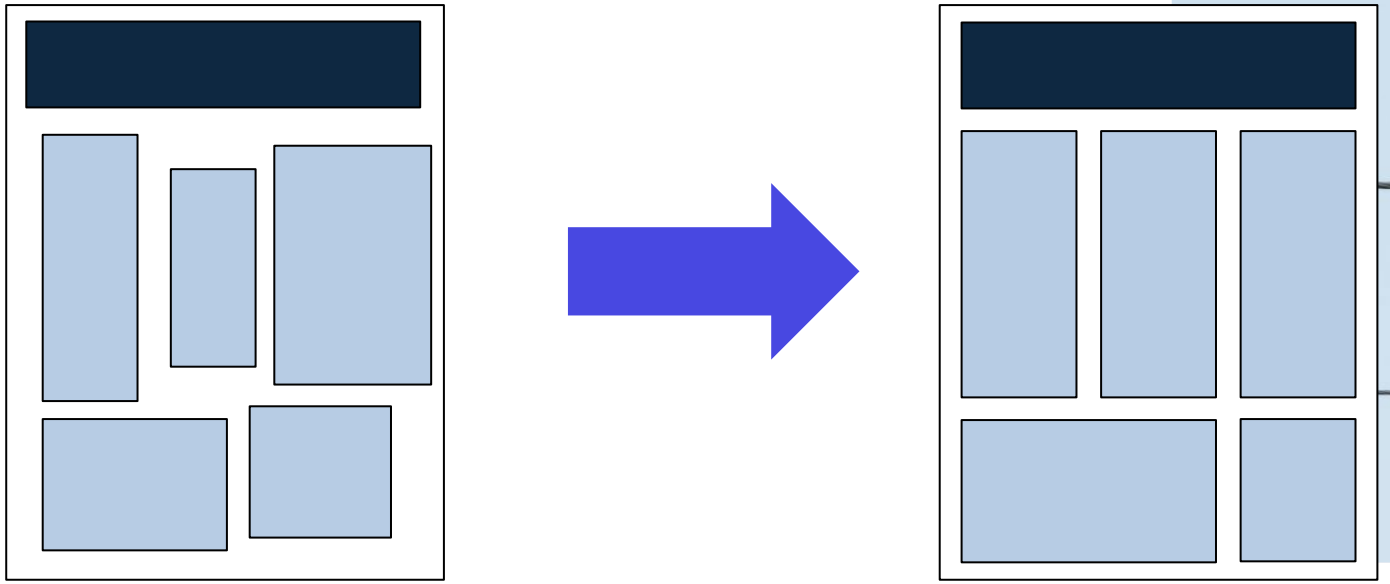
- Items relating to each other should be grouped close together.
- Space is used to create separation.



Alignment

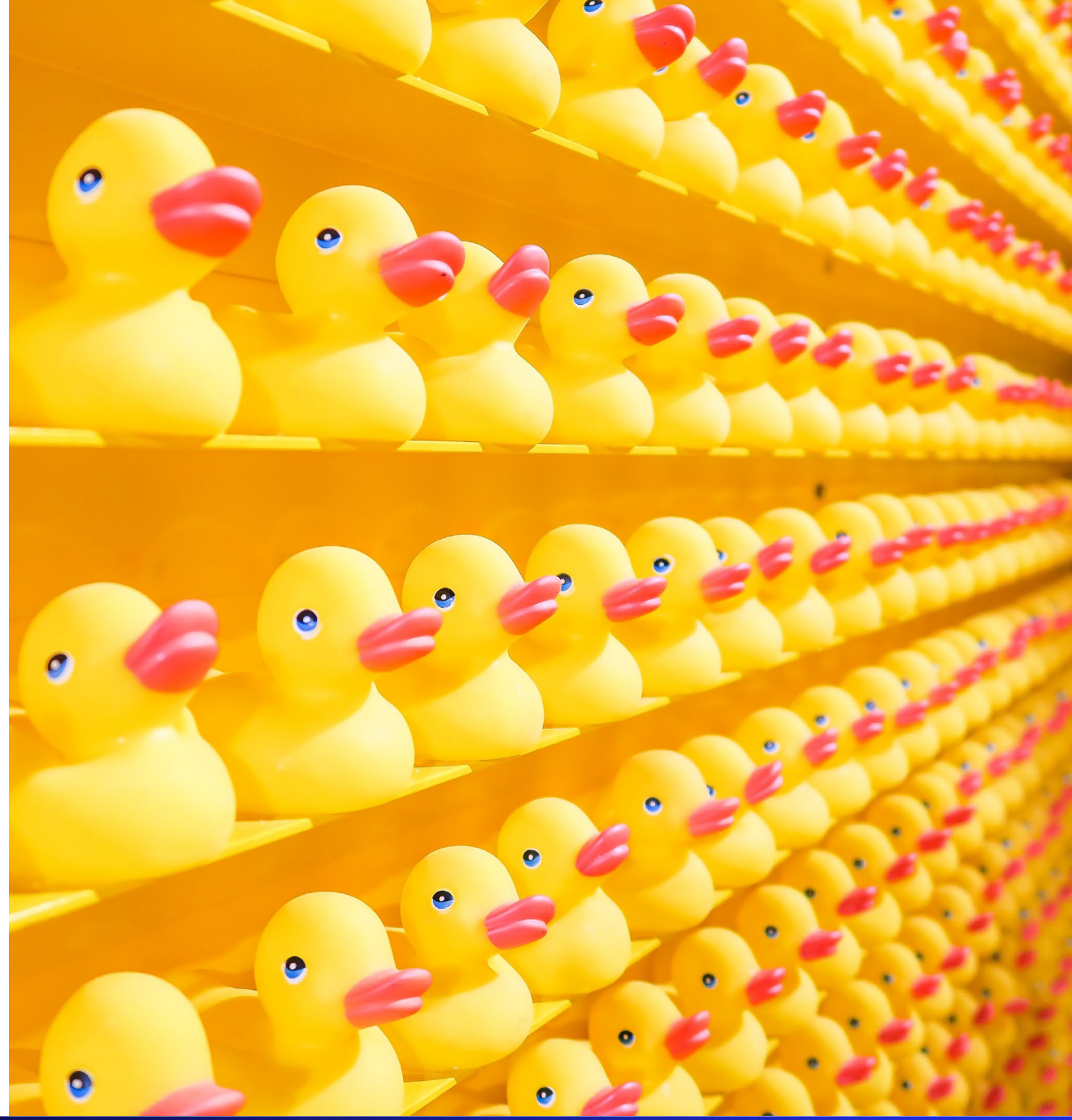
Every element should have some **visual connection** with another element.





Repetition

- Repeat visual elements including colours, shapes, textures, fonts, spatial relationships, etc.
- Develops organisation
- Strengthens unity



Contrast

Event!

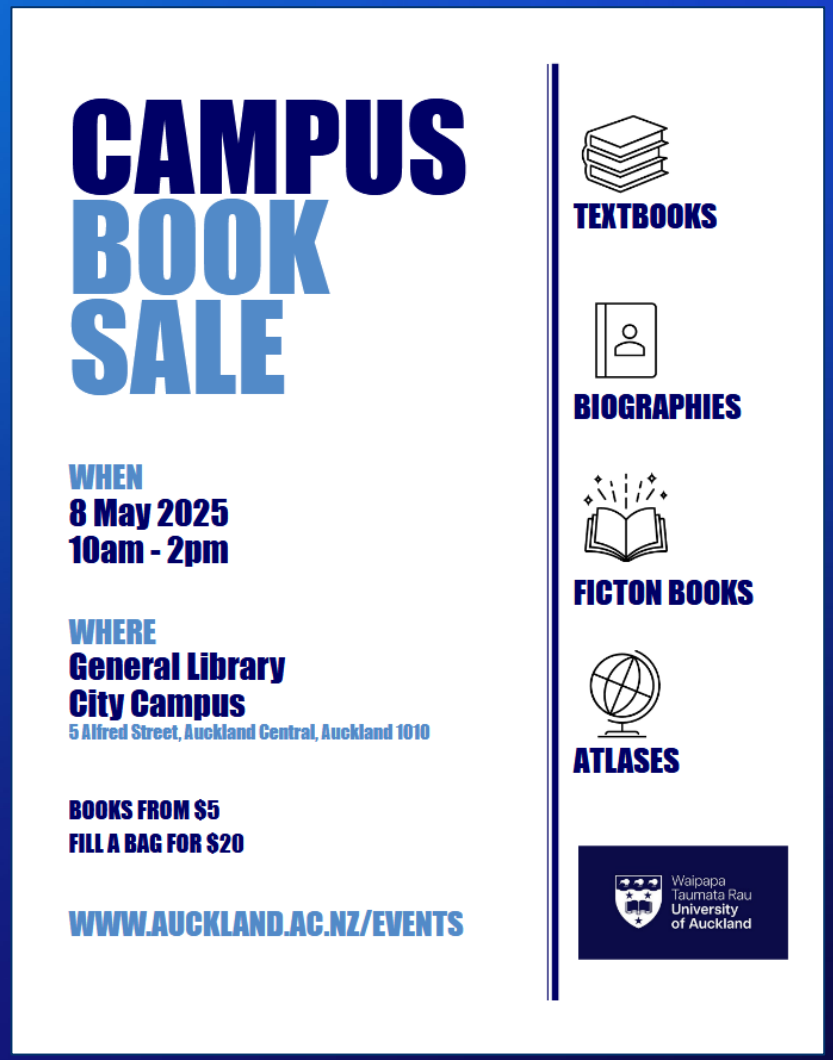
Campus book sale on 8th May 2025 starting at 10am and running until 2pm.

Textbooks, fiction books, biographies, Atlases and LOTS more!!

Lots of books for sale come and fill a bag for twenty dollars or individual books are sold from five dollars each. Come early to get the best deals at the General Library on City Campus.

See our website for more details:

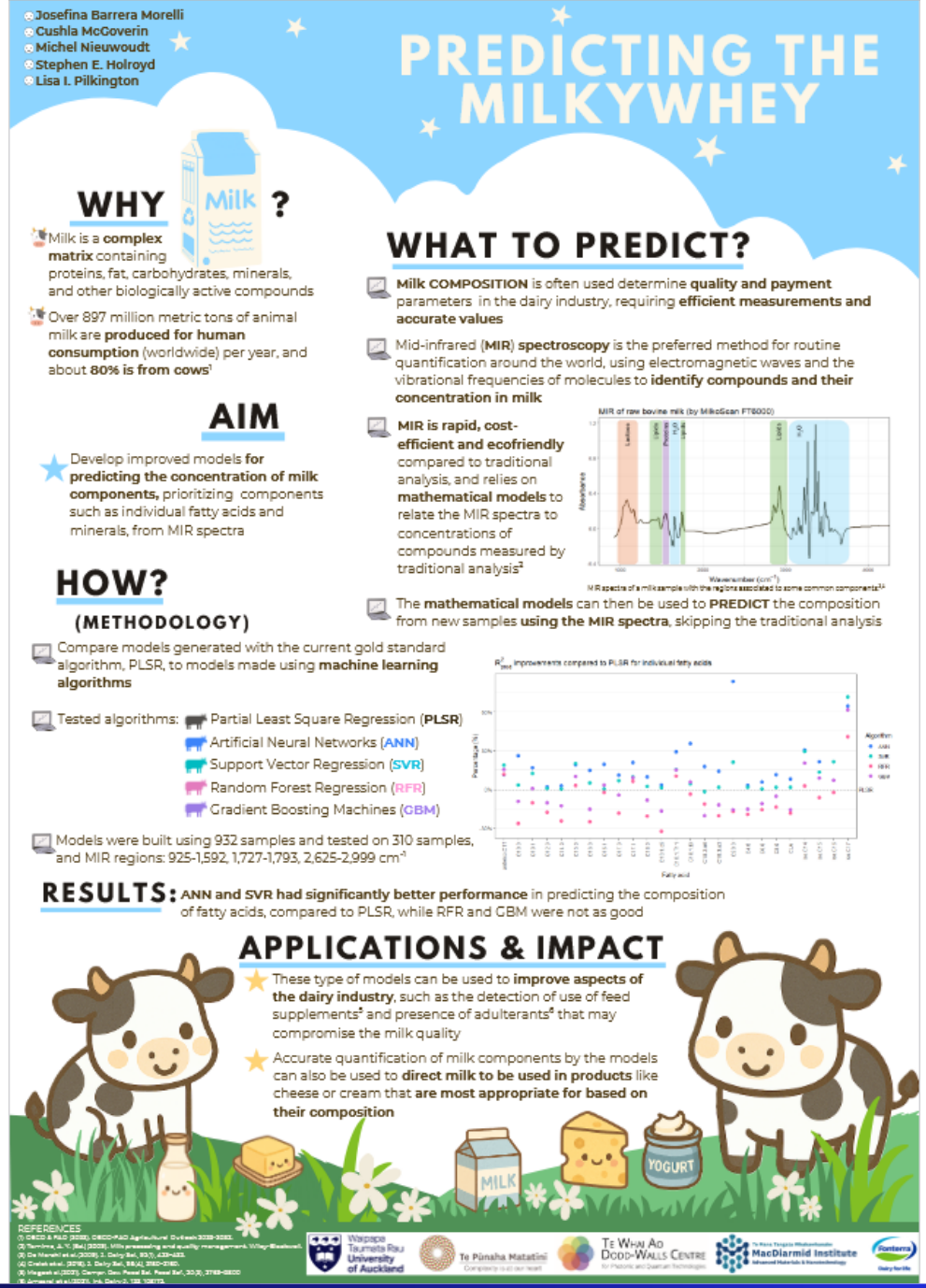
www.auckland.ac.nz/events



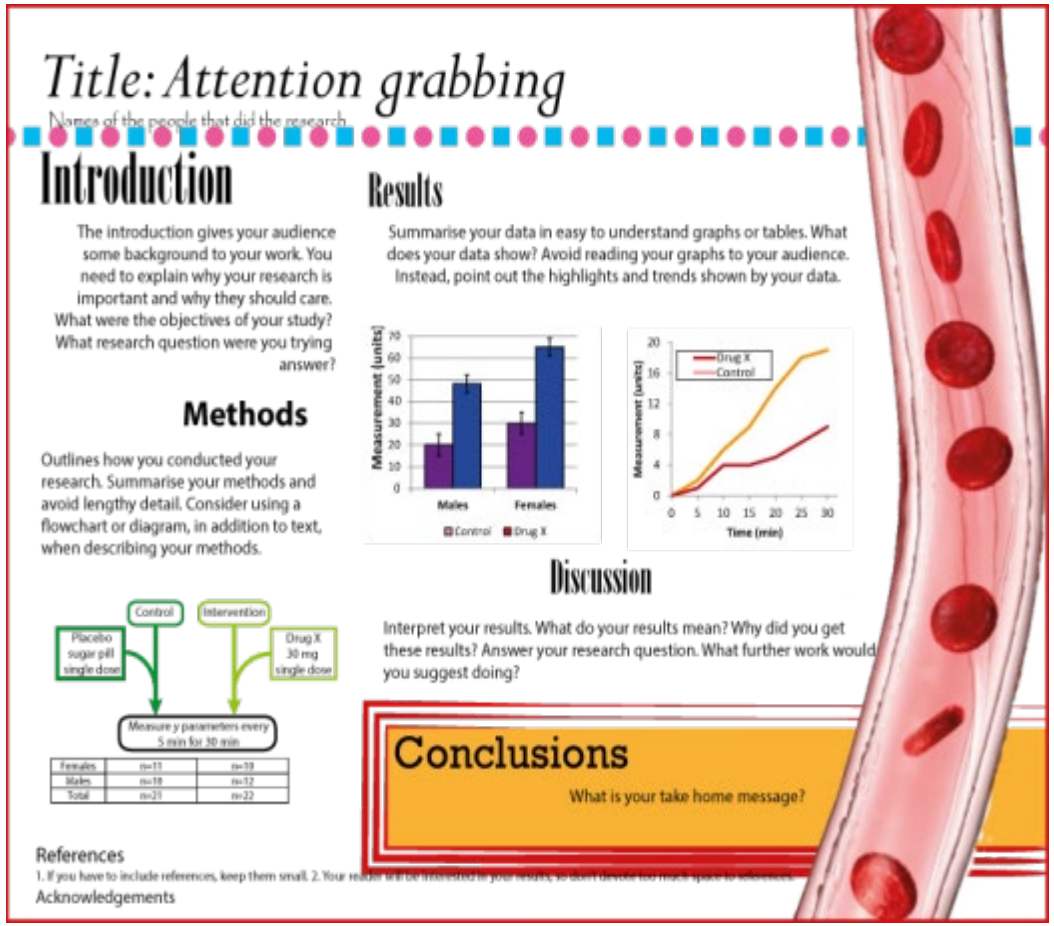
Contrast

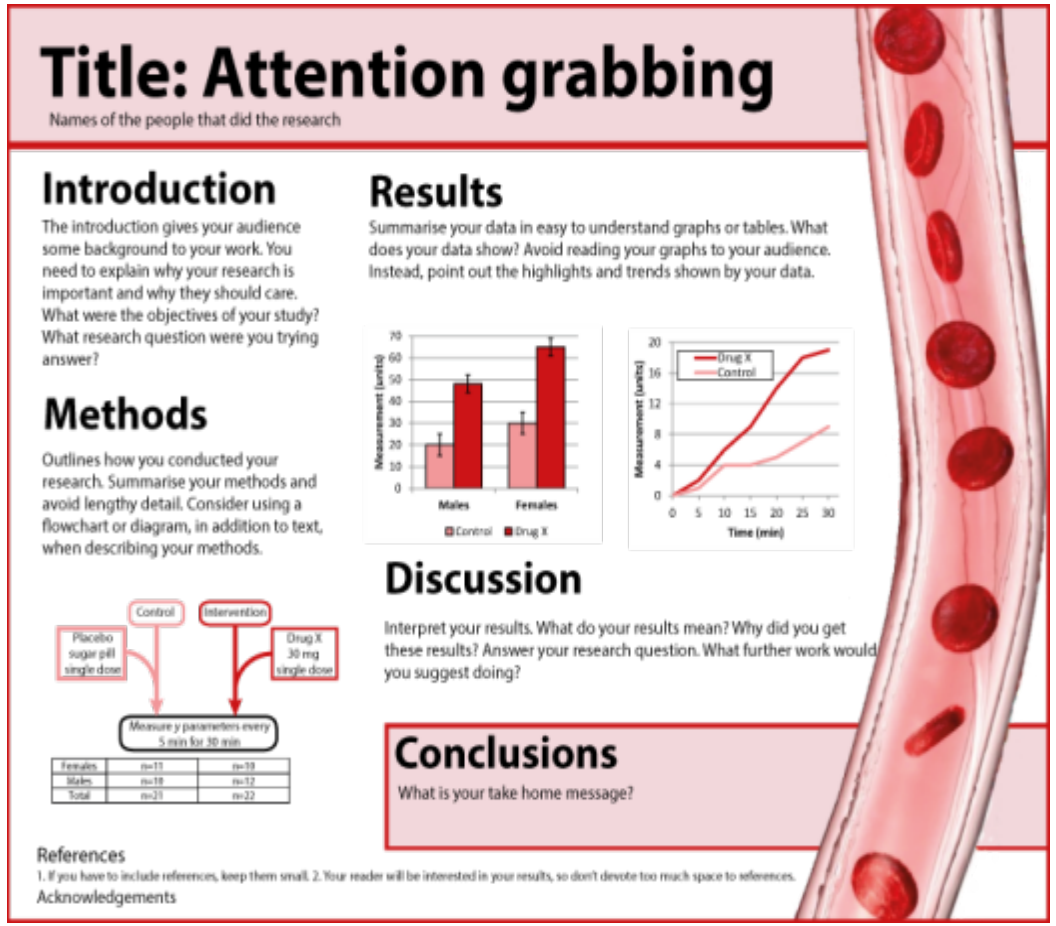
- Arranging opposing elements to create visual interest and highlight key information.

- Contrast helps users understand what is most important.



P.A.R.C in action





Questions so far?

Text

Introduction
According to the French historian Max Gallo, "for over two hundred years, posters have been displayed in public places all over the world. Visually striking, they have been designed to attract the attention of passers-by, making us aware of a political viewpoint, enticing us to attend specific events, or encouraging us to purchase a particular product or service."[1] The modern poster, as we know it, however, dates back to 1870 when the printing industry perfected colour lithography and made mass production possible.
"In little more than a hundred years", writes poster expert John Barnicoat, "it has come to be recognized as a vital art form, attracting artists at every level, from painters like Toulouse-Lautrec and Mucha to theatrical and commercial designers."[2] They have ranged in styles from Art Nouveau, Symbolism, Cubism, and Art Deco to the more formal Bauhaus and the often incoherent hippie posters of the 1960s.

Mass production
Posters, in the form of placards and posted bills, have been used since earliest times, primarily for advertising and announcements. Purely textual posters have a long history: they advertised the plays of Shakespeare and made citizens aware of government proclamations for centuries. However, the great revolution in posters was the development of printing techniques that allowed for cheap mass production and printing, including notably the technique lithography which was invented in 1796 by the German Alois Senefelder. The invention of lithography was soon followed by chromolithography, which allowed for mass editions of posters illustrated in vibrant colours to be printed.

Developing art form
By the 1890s, the technique had spread throughout Europe. A number of noted French artists created poster art in this period, foremost amongst them Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Jules Chéret, Eugène Grasset, Adolphe Willette, Pierre Bonnard, Louis Anguetin, Georges de Feure and Henri-Gabriel Ibels.[3] Chéret is considered to be the "father" of advertisement placards. He was a pencil artist and a scene decorator, who founded a small lithography office in Paris in 1866. He used striking characters, contrast and bright colours, and created over 1000 advertisements, primarily for exhibitions, theatres, and products. The industry soon attracted the service of many aspiring painters who needed a source of revenue to support themselves.
Chéret developed a new lithographic technique that suited better the needs of advertisers: he added a lot more colour which, in conjunction with innovative typography, rendered the poster much more expressive. Not surprisingly, Chéret is said to have introduced sex in advertising or, at least, to have exploited the feminine image as an advertising ploy. In contrast with those previously painted by Toulouse-Lautrec, Chéret's laughing and provocative feminine figures meant a new conception of art as being of service to advertising.
Posters soon transformed the thoroughfares of Paris into the "art galleries of the street." Their commercial success was such that some of the artists were in great demand and theatre stars personally selected their own favorite artist to do the poster for an upcoming performance. The popularity of poster art was such that in 1884 a major exhibition was held in Paris.

Commercial uses
Lithograph poster for Ranch 10, a Western-themed play by Harry Meredith which opened in New York City in August 1882
By the 1890s, poster art had widespread usage in other parts of Europe, advertising everything from bicycles to bullfights. By the end of the 19th century, during an era known as the Belle Époque, the standing of the poster as a serious artform was raised even further. Between 1895 and 1900, Jules Chéret created the Maîtres de l'Affiche (Masters of the Poster) series that became not only a commercial success, but is now seen as an important historical publication. Alphonse Mucha and Eugène Grasset were also influential poster designers of this generation, known for their Art Nouveau style and stylized figures, particularly of women. Advertisement posters became a special type of graphic art in the modern age. Poster artists such as Théophile Steinlen, Albert Guillaume, Leonetto Cappiello, Henri Thiriet and others became important figures of their day, their art form transferred to magazines for advertising as well as for social and political commentary.
In the United States, posters did not evolve to the same artistic level. American posters were primarily directed towards basic commercial needs to deliver a written message. However, the advent of the travelling circus brought colourful posters to tell citizens that a carnival was coming to town. But these too were very commercially utilitarian, of average quality, and few saw any real artistic creativity.
Many posters have had great artistic merit and have become extremely collectible. These include the posters advertising World's Fairs and Colonial Exhibitions.

Political uses
A framed poster displaying the national motto of the United States, "In God We Trust," in a New Philadelphia High School classroom.
Other times of great turmoil also produced great posters. The 1960s w the rise of pop art and protest movements throughout the West; both made great use of posters. Perhaps the most acclaimed posters were those produced by French students during the so-called "événements" of May 1968. During the 1968 Paris student riots and for years to come, Jim Fitzpatrick's stylized poster of Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara (based on the photo Guerrillero Heroico), also became a common youthful symbol of rebellion.[4]
After the September 11 attacks, public schools across the United States posted "In God We Trust" framed posters in their "libraries, cafeterias and classrooms." The American Family Association supplied several 11-by-14-inch posters to school systems.[5]

Poster printing

Many printing techniques are used to produce posters. While most posters are mass-produced, posters may also be printed by hand or in limited editions. Most posters are printed on one side and left blank on the back, the better for affixing to a wall or other surface. Pin-up sized posters are usually printed on A3 Standard Silk paper in full colour. Upon purchase, most commercially available posters are often rolled up into a cylindrical tube to allow for damage-free transportation. Rolled-up posters can then be flattened under pressure for several hours to regain their original form.

1000 words

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500 words

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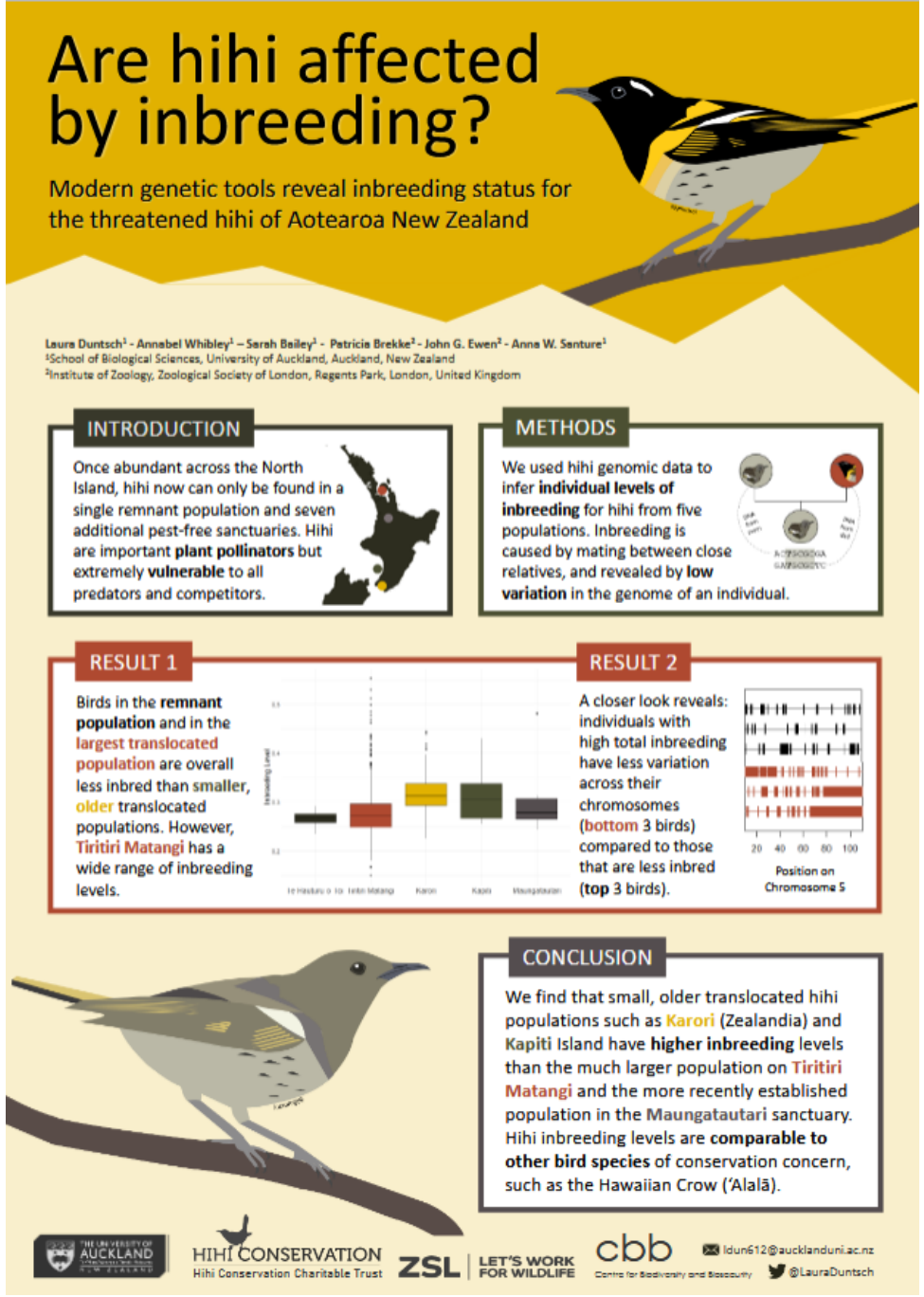
300 words

Replace text with:

- Diagrams
- Graphs
- Flowcharts
- Timelines



Replace text with:

- Pictures
- Maps

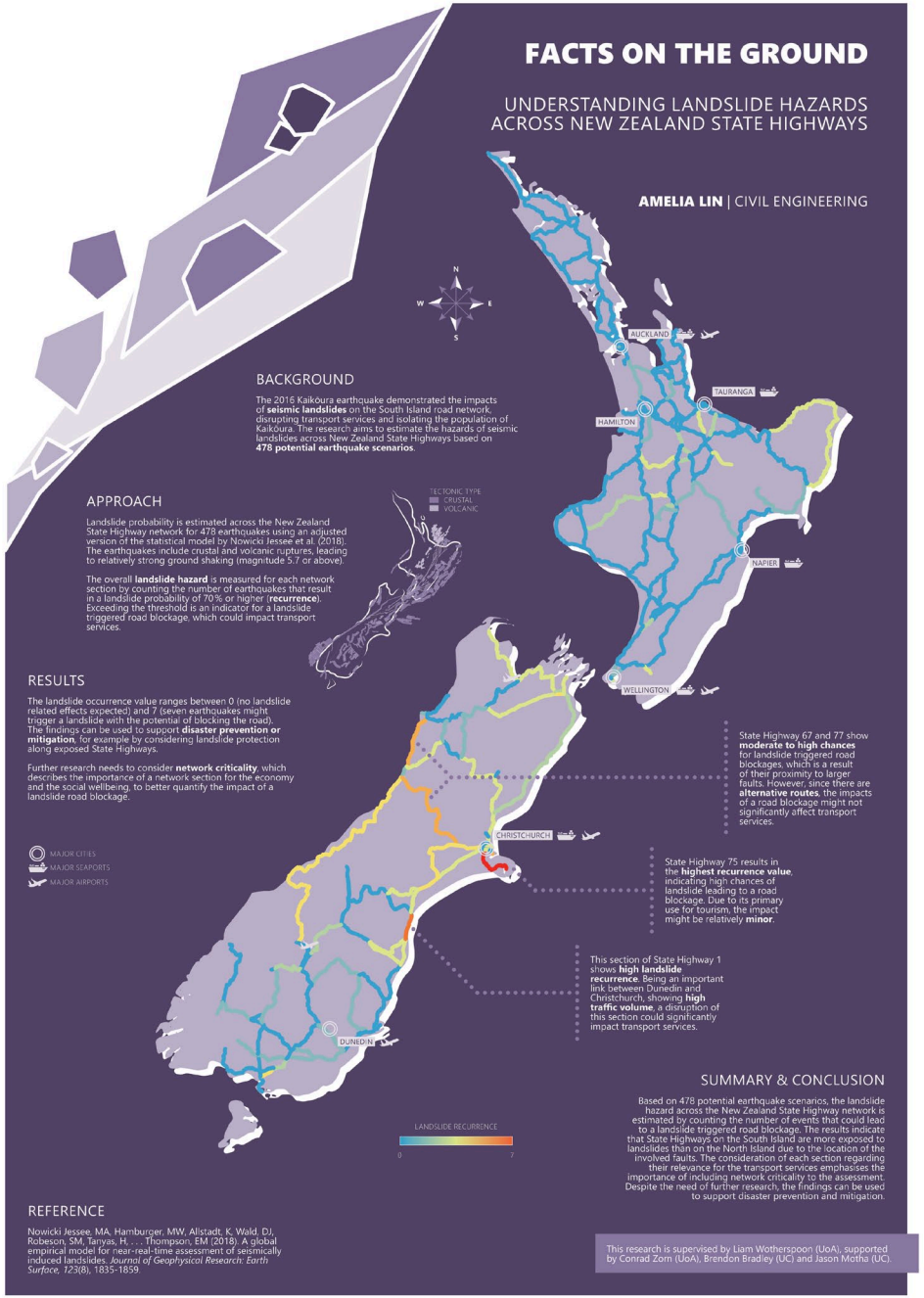


Image resolution

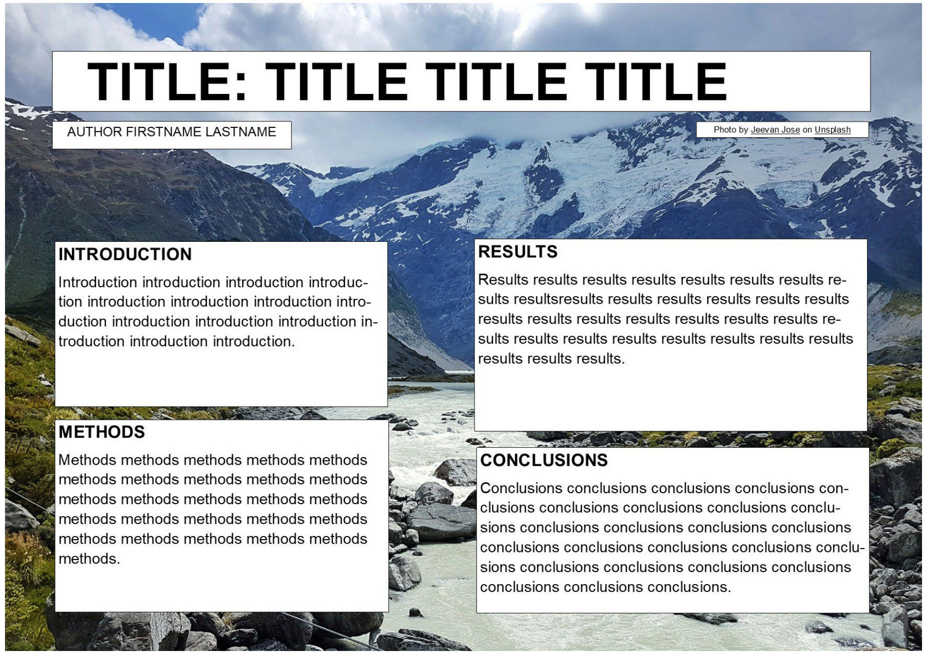
Where can I find images?

- Unsplash
- Pixabay
- Pexels
- Britannica ImageQuest (access with institution login)
- Noun Project (for icons)

Photo by Soragrit Wongsa on Unsplash

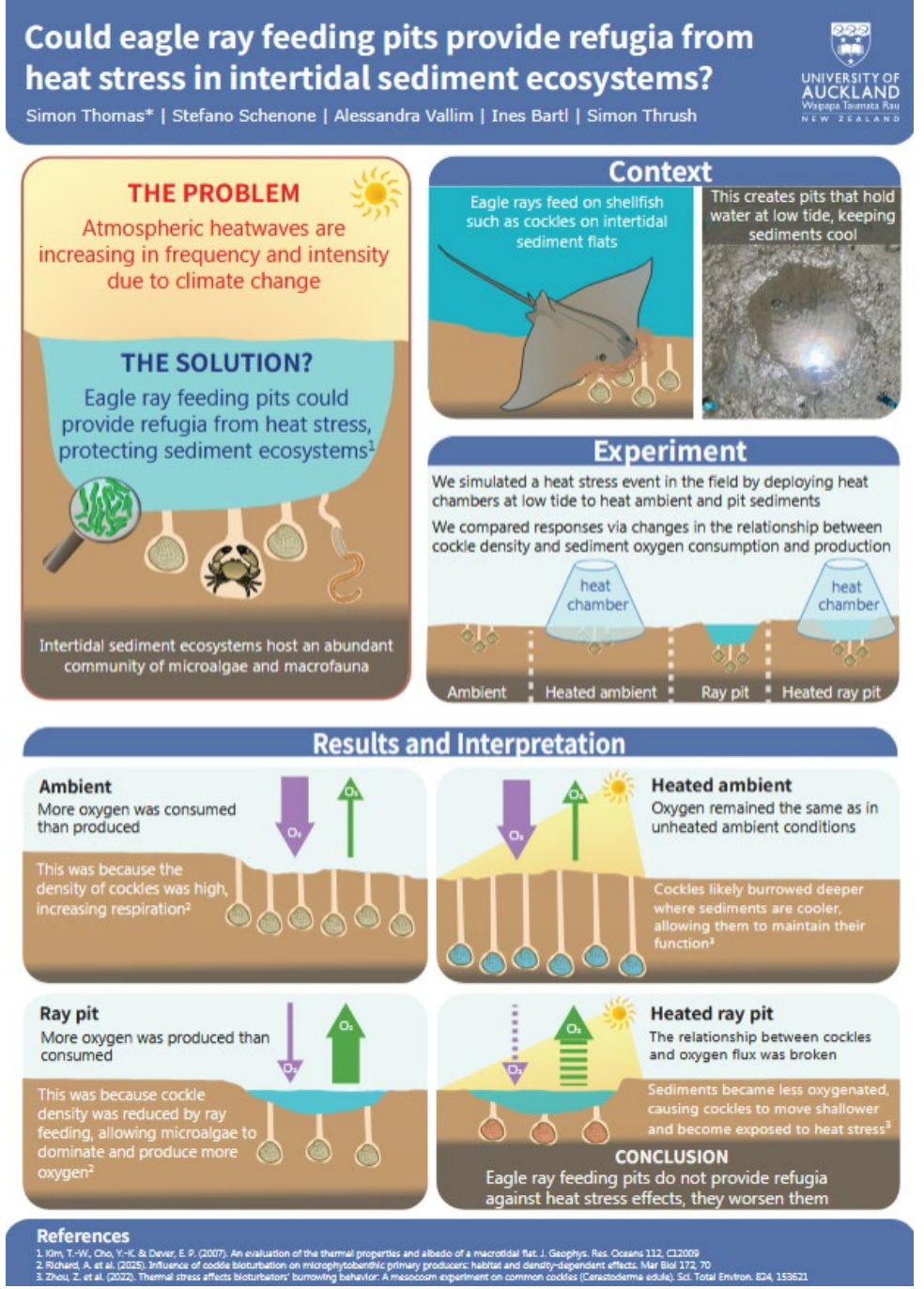
Background

- Consider using a neutral background and including your image in a separate section.
- If you are using an image as a background, consider putting your text in a neutral box to ensure it is readable.



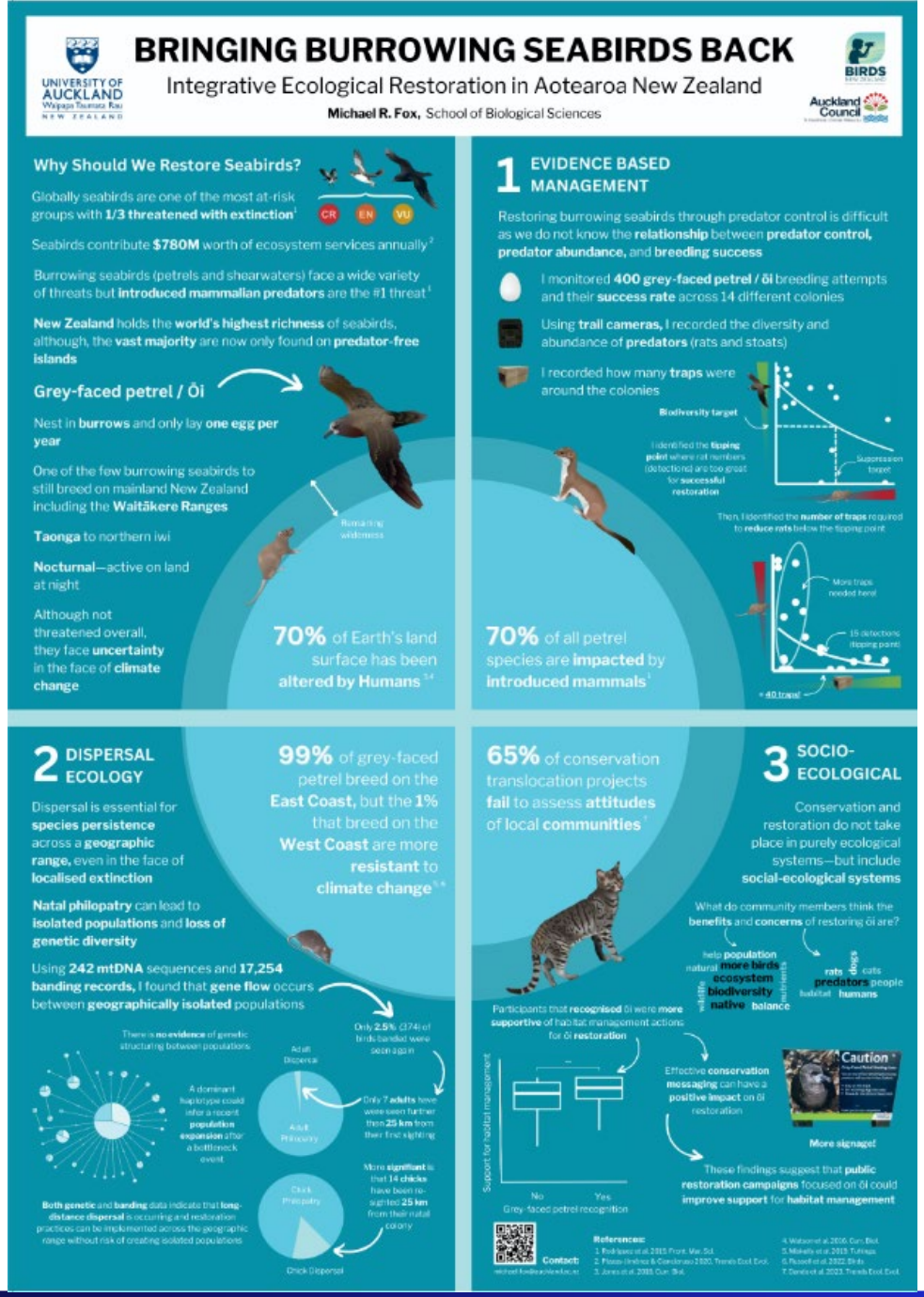
Layout

- Use columns to direct the reader.
- Your layout should be easy to follow with clear signposting or headers to help people navigate.



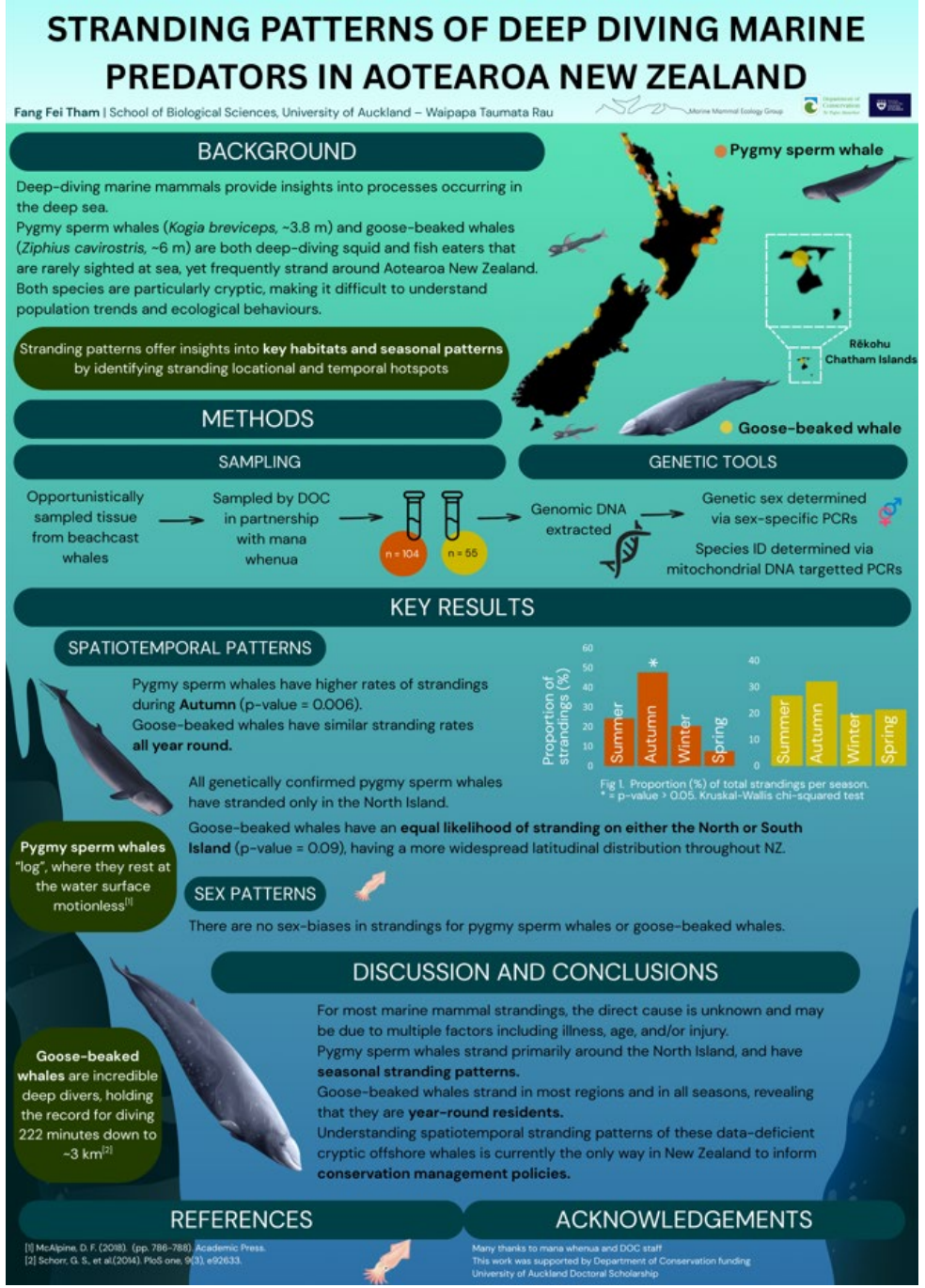
Layout

- Experiment with different column layouts to see what works best with your research.
- Consider the different elements you are including – background, methods, results, conclusion, etc.

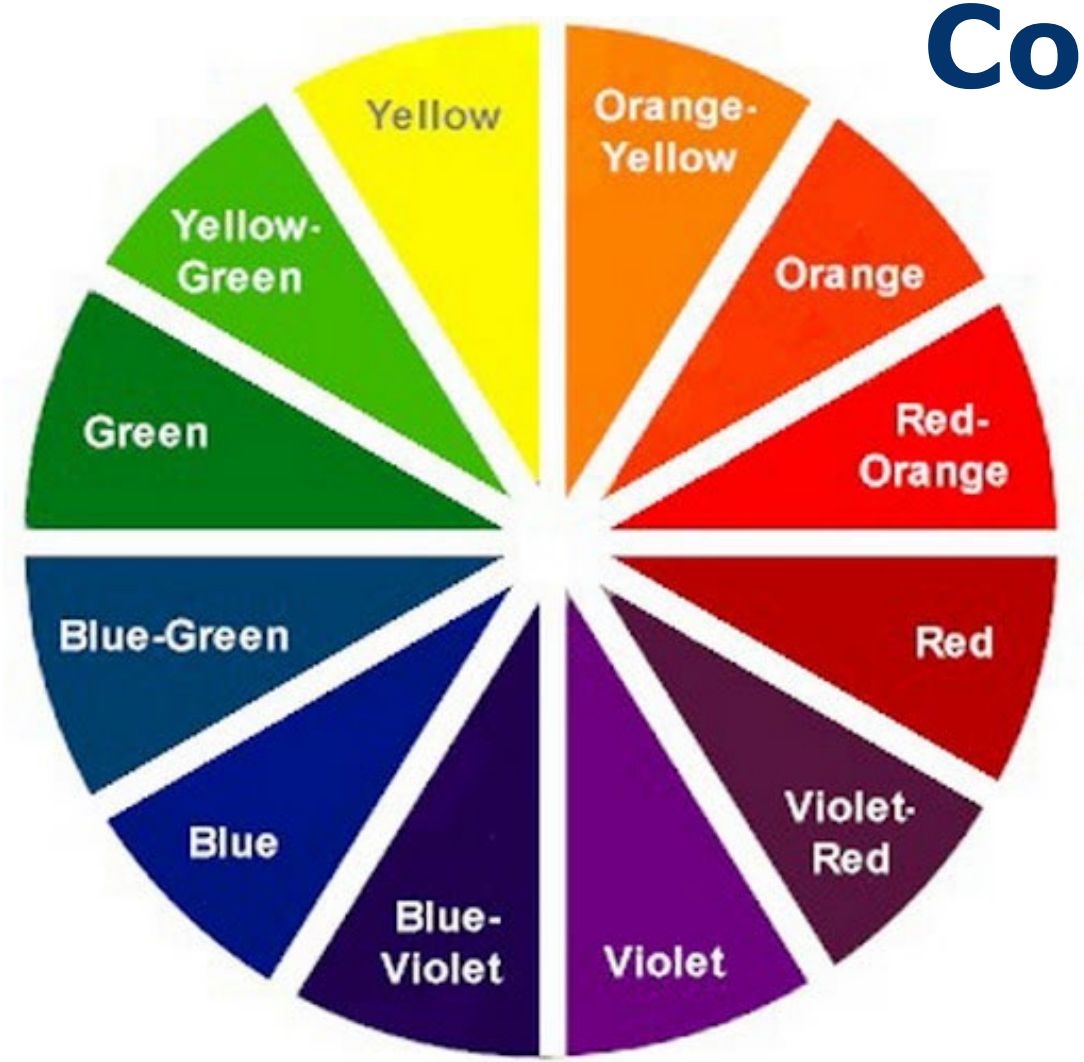


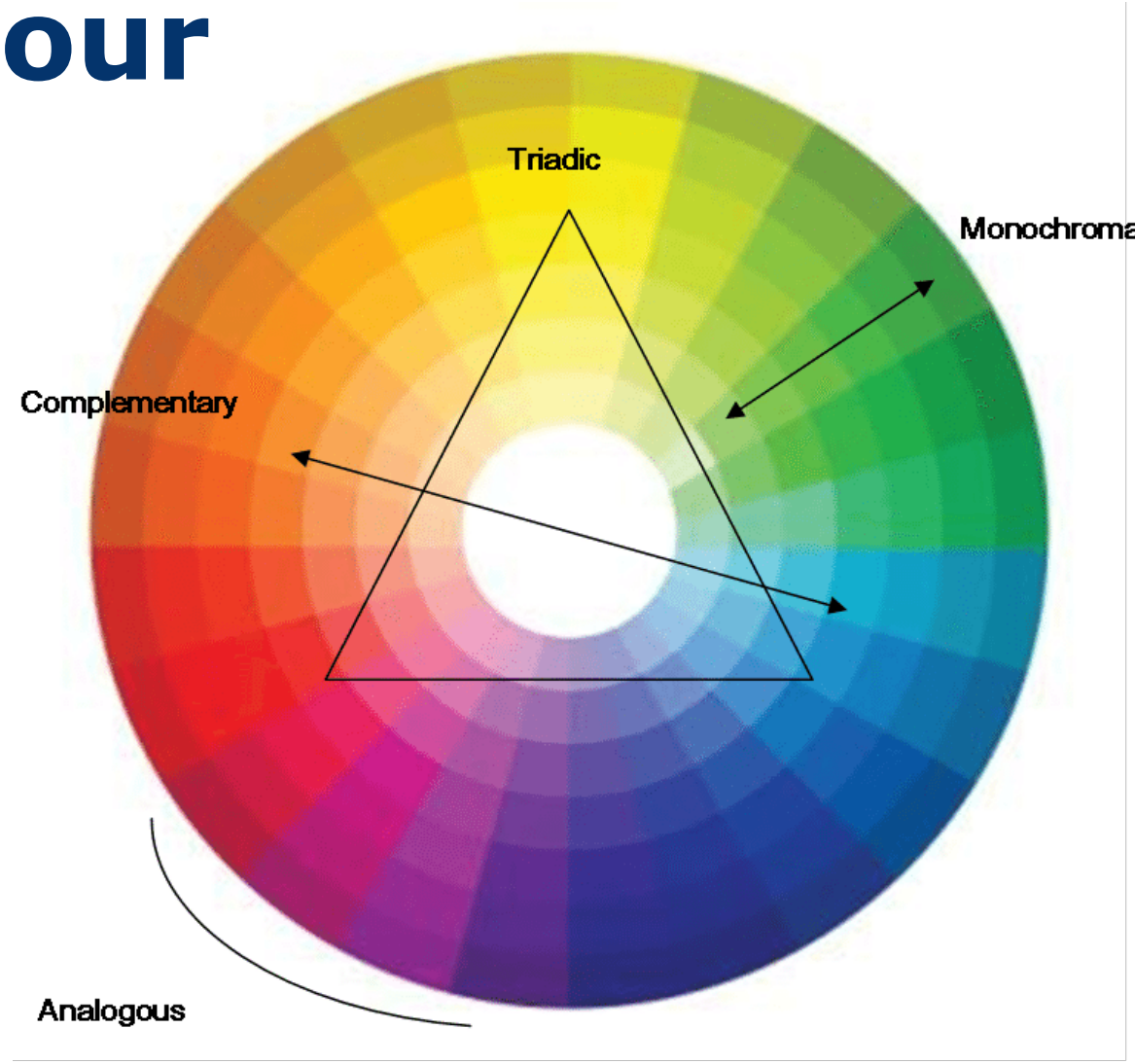
Colour

- Think about a colour that best represents your research.
- Is your research a “warm” topic? Use red, orange, yellow, etc.
- Or does it feel “cold”? Use blue, green, purple, etc.



Colour

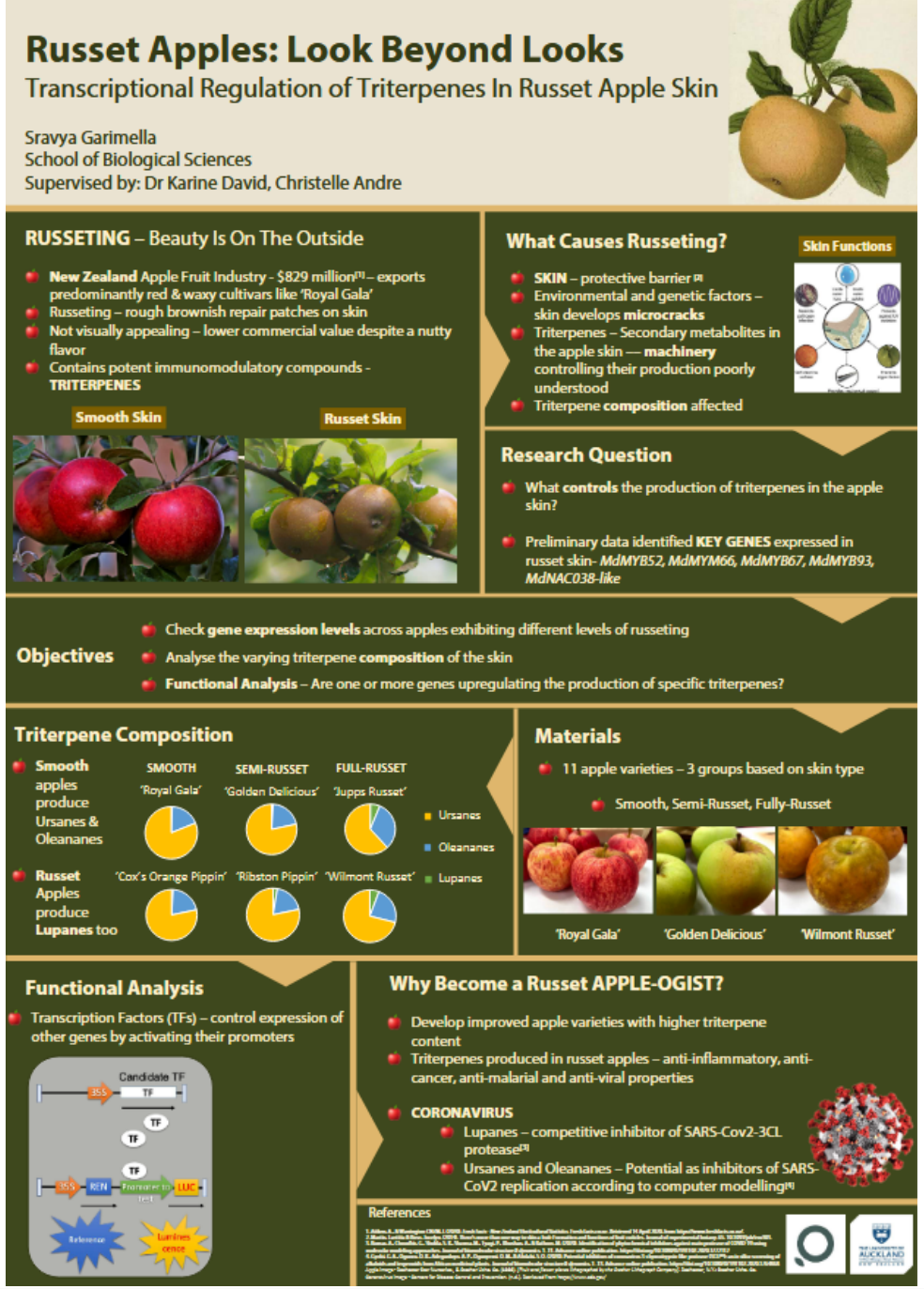

Yellow
Orange-Yellow
Yellow-Green
Orange
Green
Red-Orange
Blue-Green
Red
Blue
Violet-Red
Blue-Violet
Violet


Triadic
Monochromatic
Complementary
Analogous

Colour

If you need ideas, you can explore existing colour palettes:

- Adobe
- Canva
- Pinterest
- Coolers
- Resene



Colour


Some colour combinations
Some colour combinations make text difficult to read
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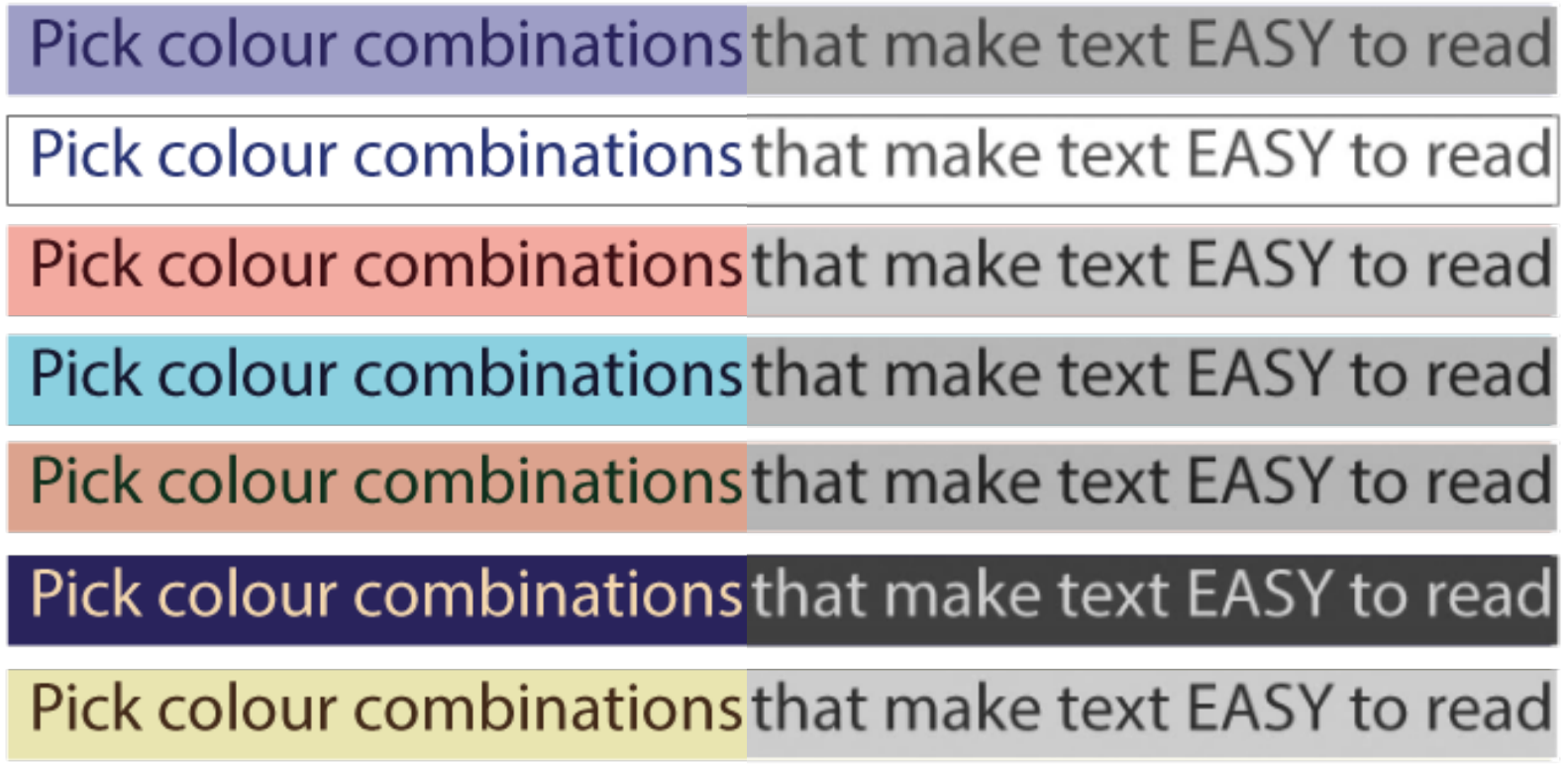
Colour


Pick colour combinations that make text EASY to read
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Font

96 Font — Title

48 Font — Headings

36 Font — Headings

24 Font — Sub-headings

20 Font — Sub-headings

18 Font — Sub-headings

16 Font — Body

14 Font — Body

12 Font — Body

10 Font — Body

Font

Use professional FONTS that people can read EASILY

Use **professional fonts** that people can **read easily**

Questions?

Contact us: library.auckland.ac.nz/ask-us

Ngā mihi!
Thanks! ☺