



TE HUNGA RANGAHAU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA  
NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

2021



## Rae Munro Award

*Louise Gorst*  
*University of Auckland*

Louise Gorst's Master of Education thesis (2021) is entitled *It is so Open-ended: Teachers' Views, Perceptions and Experiences of Leadership and Leader Identity in Early Childhood Education*. Grounded in sociocultural theory and informed by focus groups, individual interviews, and document analysis relating to two New Zealand early childhood services, the thesis reveals rich insights into teachers' views of educational leadership, leader identity, and leadership development. Leadership is shown to be complex, diverse, dynamic, socially constructed, and influenced by teachers' environments and the people around them, in particular formal leaders. Louise's thesis was described by her supervisor as "exceptional in all aspects including construction, analysis, and writing." It earned an A+ grade for going "well beyond a usual master's thesis" (examiner's report). The thesis contributes to the field of educational leadership, expanding understandings of teacher leadership grounded in the realities of early childhood settings. Louise's findings offer valuable insights into how both leadership practice and teachers' inner sense of leader identity can be developed in the New Zealand early childhood context. Given the scope, quality, and significance of Louise's thesis along with its implications for education practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, we are delighted to acknowledge Louise as a worthy recipient of NZARE's 2021 Rae Munro Award.