Finance professor Stuart Locke is on a mission to make New Zealanders more financially literate. It concerns him that people leave school with scant understanding of issues around buying and selling, consumer rights, job entitlements, interest rates and the sharemarket, just to name a few.

Stuart, who was made professor late last year, will be talking about financial literacy in his upcoming Inaugural Professorial Lecture taking place on Tuesday 11 March.

“It used to be that my work was purely academic, but over the years I’ve decided we need to get people much more familiar with aspects of finance. Instead of using big words and making it sound complicated, we need to break it down and make it easily digestible.”

Stuart is chair of the Finance Department at the Management School and came to Waikato as associate dean in 1999, after working at Victoria and Massey universities and Ernst & Young.

Much of his research has focussed on aspects of governance and small business. He has just been awarded a 2014 University of Waikato Fellowship to York University in the UK for a month to investigate a small business financing scheme run through Finance Yorkshire. His research, over a number of years, has found little impact is gained through small business initiatives in New Zealand and not surprisingly they just die off. “The Yorkshire scheme looks sound, has been operating for several years, and gets results and positive outcomes beyond the financial outputs. A form of this policy may work here in New Zealand,” he says.

Inaugural Professorial Lectures are the University’s way of introducing our newest professors to the community and staff are encouraged to attend. Stuart’s lecture, Beyond the piggy bank: making financial literacy fly, is on Tuesday 11 March at 6pm in the Gallagher Academy of Performing Arts, Gate 1, University of Waikato. The Opus Bar is open from 5pm.