

# Ben Gaskin

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## SUMMARY

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PhD candidate under Peter Godfrey-Smith at the University of Sydney, researching minimal cognition and the evolution of intelligence. I combine scientific and philosophical inquiry with a technical facility in computational neuroscience and evolutionary algorithms, leveraging simulations and models to explore contemporary debates.

## SKILLS

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### RESEARCH

**Interdisciplinarity:** philosophy, cognitive science, developmental psychology, biology, computer science  
**Literature Reviews:** interdisciplinary synthesis, statistical and experimental methods, historical context  
**Academic Communications:** writing, proofreading and editing, audiovisual presentation, public speaking  
**Other Skills:** data analysis, critical thinking, technical expertise, event coordination, project management

### PROGRAMMING

**Languages:** Python, Javascript, English  
**Libraries:** MLX, PyTorch, Taichi, NumPy, Pandas, Ray, Prefect  
**Computational Neuroscience:** spiking neural networks, spike-timing dependent plasticity, spike coding  
**Evolutionary Computation:** genetic algorithms, direct and indirect encoding, neural architecture search  
**Simulations & Models:** neural cellular automata, physical systems, reinforcement learning environments

## EDUCATION

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<b>University of Sydney</b>	2024 –
<i>Doctor of Philosophy</i>	<i>Research Training Program Stipend Scholarship</i>
<b>University of Auckland</b>	2020 – 2022
<i>Master of Arts in Philosophy</i>	<i>Research Masters Scholarship, First Class Honours</i>
<b>University of Auckland</b>	2019 – 2020
<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Philosophy</i>	<i>First Class Honours</i>
<b>University of Auckland</b>	2018 – 2019
<i>Graduate Diploma in Philosophy</i>	
<b>University of Auckland</b>	2015 – 2018
<i>Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Politics</i>	

## EXPERIENCE

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<b>nScribe.ai</b>	2023 –
<i>Founder</i>	<i>International</i>
<b>OnThisDay.com</b>	2017 – 2024
<i>Editor</i>	<i>Remote</i>
<b>Watercare Laboratory Services</b>	2010 – 2015
<i>Laboratory Assistant</i>	<i>Auckland, New Zealand</i>

## PUBLICATIONS

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<b>Symbol Grounding in the Age of LLMs</b>	2025
<i>Social Robots with AI: Prospects, Risks, and Responsible Methods</i>	
<b>After Babel, the Horizontal War: City and Technique in Jacques Ellul</b>	2023
<i>Philosophical Journal of Conflict &amp; Violence</i>	

## PRESENTATIONS

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<b>Can a single cell learn?</b>	2025
<i>Australia/New Zealand Philosophy of Biology Workshop</i>	
<b>Symbol grounding in the age of LLMs</b>	2024
<i>Robophilosophy</i>	
<b>Logic and artificial life: robotics and the later work of Kitarō Nishida</b>	2024
<i>International Society of East Asian Philosophy</i>	
<b>Egocentric speech in children and machines</b>	2024
<i>Agency and Language in Artificial Intelligence</i>	
<b>Containment and many-sidedness: a comparative study of Aristotelian and Jain logics</b>	2022
<i>World Congress on Logic and Religion</i>	
<b>Where are words? Predictive processing and the cognitive penetration of language</b>	2021
<i>Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference</i>	

## CERTIFICATIONS

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<b>Computational Neuroscience</b>	2025
<i>University of Washington</i>	<i>via Coursera (online)</i>
<b>Mathematics for Machine Learning</b>	2023
<i>DeepLearning.ai</i>	<i>via Coursera (online)</i>
<b>TensorFlow Developer Professional Certificate</b>	2023
<i>DeepLearning.ai</i>	<i>via Coursera (online)</i>
<b>Basic Youth and Community Counselling</b>	2019
<i>Youthline</i>	<i>Auckland, New Zealand</i>

## REFERENCES

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<b>Peter Godfrey-Smith</b>	University of Sydney
<i>peter.godfrey-smith@sydney.edu.au</i>	<i>Professor</i>
<b>John Bishop</b>	University of Auckland
<i>jc.bishop@auckland.ac.nz</i>	<i>Emeritus Professor</i>
<b>Matheson Russell</b>	University of Auckland
<i>m.russell@auckland.ac.nz</i>	<i>Associate Professor</i>