

HERITAGE

HE REO MO NGĀ TAONGA TUKU IHO

VOICES

2026 SPRING
NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC
PLACES
AOTEAROA

A WINNING STRAIGHT FLUSH FOR HERITAGE REST ROOMS

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Heritage loos make more than just a cameo appearance. Photo / Te Manawa Museum



Elizabeth Pishief
HPA Chair

Hello everyone. Kia ora koutou. Welcome to our Spring edition of Heritage Voices/He Reo Mo Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho.

Key things to note:

- [Blue Plaques](#)
- [Aotearoa History and Heritage Alliance:](#)
- [AGM](#)
- [ACHS 2026 Tūhono](#)

Blue Plaques

We have received our first group of Blue Plaques now, and the three Hawke's Bay ones I have seen are stunning. We have another seven in the pipeline. This is an exciting project for HPA and we hope all MOs will get behind it and apply for funding to mark noteworthy places in their regions.

We are promoting themes to help people identify places and enable us to develop linked heritage trails across New Zealand. The themes we are promoting are conservation, women, and activism. We already have blue plaques marking the homes of two important conservationists, including one on Te Kōhanga, at Paekākāriki – the home of Captain E.V. Sanderson the founder of the NZ Native Bird Protection Society, instrumental in establishing Kāpiti Island as a nature reserve.



Te Kōhanga and the supporters of the Blue Plaque.

We will be promoting a trail remembering Mother Mary Aubert, but there are many other women who have worked to improve the lives of children and the poor who could be commemorated with a Blue Plaque.

Our third theme is activism and protest movements. There are numerous places in New Zealand where events took place which led to political disruption and change. It is important that we remember these events and the people who participated in them and a Blue Plaque is an appropriate way to mark such places that is easily recognised by local and international tourists.

For further information and an application form please go to the Blue Plaque website or contact HPA. We are delighted to announce we now have a new email for correspondence relating to Blue Plaques! You can reach us at:

blueplaques@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

Aotearoa History and Heritage Alliance

Historic Places Aotearoa will be signing a joint letter opposing the proposed cuts to National Archives and the National Library, which we were alerted to by members of AHHA on Wednesday 2 September.

I have copied some of the Press Release from the Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi to explain what is happening:

Our precious history under threat as National Library and Archives faces more Government cuts

- Proposal to cut 12% of workforce or 47 FTEs
- National Library and Archives NZ admits services will be hit

The National Library and Archives NZ (NLNZ) are key custodians of our nation's history. They are again being savaged by Government spending cuts, with a proposal to shed 12% of its workforce. It is feared that:

- the cataloguing backlog will grow, meaning people like families, historians and genealogists will face delays accessing items or will not be able to find items at all.
- staff will not have the same capacity to assist people to find what they need to research family histories, write books, or understand the past.
- critical information from many government agencies like police, courts, health that Archives is required to store may take longer to transfer and record impacting people's ability to access their own records.

"How can we understand our past and learn the lessons of history, if the Government is kneecapping the very organisation charged with protecting it?" said Duane Leo, National Secretary for the Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi.

"The Government promises AI will fill the gap. AI won't be able to catalogue the ever growing collection of material donated to Archives. AI won't be able to help people navigate millions of records. AI won't be able to guide school groups through He Tohu, the permanent exhibition of our iconic constitutional documents like Te Tiriti.

Don't forget to ask the candidates in your electorate what their party is intending to do to support Arts, Culture and Heritage – which are the keys to personal and community well-being and fundamental to our identity as a Nation.

We will be having our AGM in Wellington, on Saturday 28 November. I mentioned in the previous newsletter that as part of the AGM, we will be hosting a workshop on local knowledge and climate change using a participatory tool developed by a PhD candidate from Ireland, Samantha Tobias.

I hope many of you will find this interesting and be willing to participate. It is entirely anonymous. The Rapid Check is based on conditional questions and is available through a browser-based application. The idea behind the Rapid Check and the workshop is that local observations and lived experiences constitute valuable forms of knowledge.

The Association of Critical Heritage Studies will be holding its biennial international conference in Wellington between the 29 November and 2 December 2026. TŪHONO means to connect, while the theme of RELATIONALITY enables us to explore how heritage connects us with each other, with the past and with the land.

Historic Places Aotearoa is one of the sponsors of the conference. The draft programme is on the website, and I encourage you to check it out, join the mailing list and consider attending all or some of the events. There are day registrations available, and the conference begins the day after our AGM.

2026 JEREMY SALMOND MEMORIAL LECTURE - CHARACTER COALITION

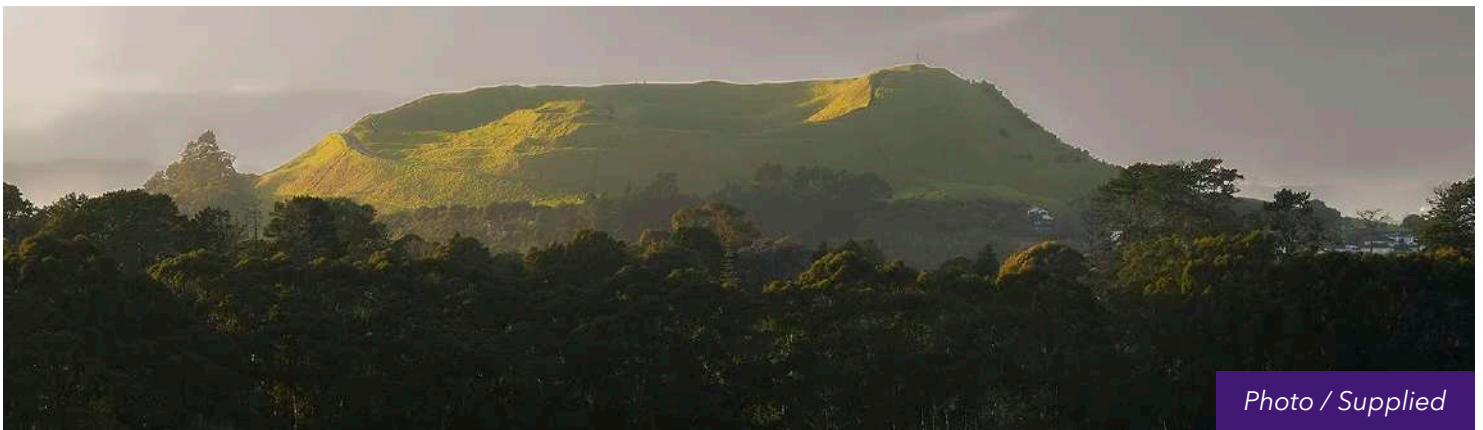


Photo / Supplied

Saving Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland's precious volcanic landscape. Heritage landscape architect Stephen Brown explores the history and future of our volcanic cones.

The Character Coalition is holding the second Jeremy Salmond Memorial Lecture on 6 October during the Auckland Heritage Festival. Renowned heritage landscape architect Stephen Brown's talk will explore the history and future of Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland's volcanic landscape. From isthmus cones and pā sites to 'The Sacred Footprints of Mataoho' in South Auckland, Stephen will outline the enduring fight to protect the city's volcanic viewshafts. The talk will cover the pivotal 1973 Planning Appeal Board decision over Mt

Eden/Maungawhau, the formal protection of key sightlines to Tūpuna Maunga since 1975, and modern statutory challenges including the 2015 Unitary Plan, 2022's Plan Change 78, and the current PC120. Discover why these sightlines remain critical to Auckland's identity and why they are now under threat.



This free event will be held in the Bell Gully function rooms on top of 1 Queen Street, with spectacular views across the harbour.



6 October: Drinks and nibbles start from 5pm, and the evening concludes at 7.30pm.

To secure your place, go to: <https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/saving-tamaki-makaurauaucklands-precious-volcanic-landscape-tickets-1996357954382>

A WINNING STRAIGHT FLUSH FOR HERITAGE REST ROOMS



Grant Smith
Mayor of Palmerston North

A major new art prize celebrates historic 'wee space' in the centre of Palmerston North

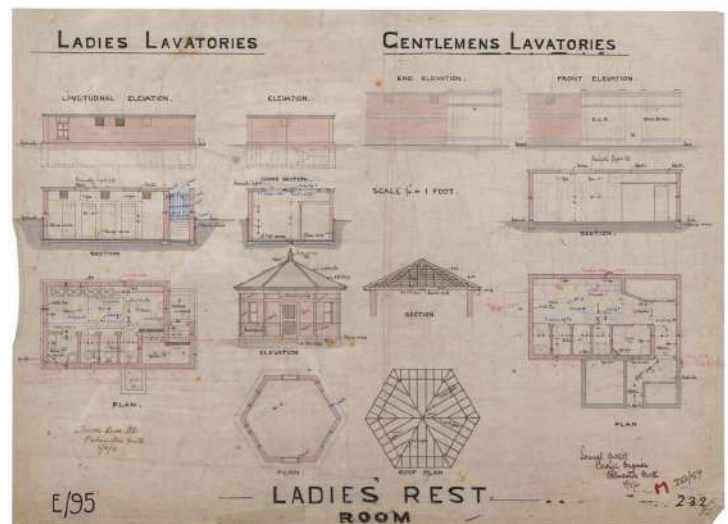
A community plea to preserve the art deco integrity of a "wee space" during the 2004 refurbishment of Palmerston North's central Te Marae o Hine/The Square has resulted in the heritage ladies' loos "coming up roses" 22 years later.

The city's historic Ladies' Rest Rooms were built in 1936 on the Te Marae o Hine quadrant across from the landmark Central Post Office building - then with its distinctive Edwardian clock tower still intact.

Replacing a 1918 hexagonal ladies' lavatory on the same site, the art deco Ladies' Rest was constructed for the council by A.W. Wood & Sons for £1,859 - the equivalent of around \$288,000 today - to new post-1931 Napier earthquake building codes.

The distinctive civic amenity adjacent to The Square rose gardens provided an attended inner-city sanctuary for the women of Palmerston North throughout the next seven decades.

The Palmerston North Ladies' Rest in 1939 not long after its construction. *Photo / Manawātū Heritage*



1916 drawings for the original hexagonal Ladies Lavatories that were constructed on The Square in 1918. *Photo / Manawātū Heritage*

However, during the comprehensive remodelling of Te Marae o Hine in the early 2000s, there was concern that the building would be compromised or demolished by plans to incorporate unisex toilets and a visitor centre.

A group called CAMEO - Community Action by

Mothers and Existing Other Users – forced an agreement that preserved the art deco stand-alone character of the original structure, while enabling the other features. The significance of this was recognised in 2019 when the Ladies' Rest became a feature stop on the Palmerston North City Library Women's Places digital heritage app.



ABOVE: Members of CAMEO in 2002 protest plans to demolish Ladies' Rest. Photo / Manawatū Heritage

BELOW: A 1996 Ladies' Rest "cameo". Photo / Manawatū Heritage



In January this year, 90 years after construction, the Palmy Ladies' Rest appeared in Lonely Planet's *Toilets of the World* as one of New Zealand's five most picturesque toilet blocks under the heading "Palmerston North's Art Deco dunnies". In May, following a public submission, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga confirmed that the 1936 building qualified for a [Category 2 Historic Places listing](#).



Photo / Manawatū Heritage

The rest rooms completed its winning flush in August this year when Wellington-based multi-media artist Emily Hartley-Skudder was awarded the inaugural Eileen Fair Trust Prize for CAMEO – an exhibition dedicated to celebrating Palmy's heritage public loo.



Emily Hartley-Skudder in front of one of her works for the CAMEO exhibition at Palmerston North's Te Manawa Museum of Art, Science and Heritage.

Photo / Warwick Smith, Manawatū Standard

The annual \$40,000 prize had been established by the late Dr Eileen Fair who died in 2024. The geography lecturer, businesswoman, property developer, philanthropist and art collector - who coincidentally was born in 1936 - made provision for the Fair Trust Art Prize to be administered through Palmerston North's Te Manawa Museum of Art, Science and Heritage.

This substantial art prize further extends the wider Fair family legacy in Palmerston North. Fairs Rd in Milson acknowledges the family's role in facilitating city growth by surrendering land for the Milson Railway Deviation that eventually rerouted the North Island Main Trunk Line out of the city centre. As well as residential developments such as Fair Acres and Clearview Park, the land now occupied by Colquhoun Park with its international softball diamonds, was sold to the city council in 1955 by Eileen's father, James Fair.

CAMEO - Emily Hartley-Skudder's Eileen Fair Trust Prize exhibition that celebrates community, social, civic and architectural heritage, is on at Te Manawa in Main St Palmerston North until July 2027.

WHY LOCAL ADVISERS MATTER: A VIEW FROM THE EAST COAST

Lilian Tangaere Baldwin
Te Wiwi Nati Hapū Trust

The Department of Internal Affairs has proposed cutting its community adviser roles from 70 to 40 and consolidating 16 regional offices into three – in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington. It is understood that two of the roles proposed to go are in Tairāwhiti.

I've worked alongside DIA advisers since 2000, and what worries me most isn't only that the roles are leaving the regions. It's what they're being turned into.

Their real value has never been the paperwork. It's the relationship: knowing our people, travelling up the Coast, understanding what it costs to build out here, and being able to stand behind a group and say, "these people have the capability and capacity to complete their project."

Our funds are already contestable, and contestable funding favours those with capacity: paid grant writers, staff, polished accounts and good internet. Our marae committees, sports clubs and community groups are mostly volunteers doing this at night after everything else. The local adviser is the equaliser. They help groups get application-ready and carry the story behind the numbers into the decision-making room.

A Heritage Example



Restoration work at Te Horo Marae in Ruatōria was made possible by a \$299,350 Oranga Marae grant, supported by the help of a local DIA adviser. Photo / Lilian Tangaere Baldwin

Te Horo Marae in Ruatōria recently received an Oranga Marae grant for restoration and repair work. Before applying, we commissioned a structural condition report from Architects 44, a Gisborne firm that has worked on church and marae restoration across the East Coast for more than 25 years. Together with the support of our local adviser, that report gave assessors confidence that our costs were real and our project was sound.

Remote projects can cost up to 50% more than urban ones. Without a local adviser to explain that, an assessor three regions away sees a high quote and says no. As Architects 44 director Dan King has said, without a local officer confirming that remote building costs are legitimate, projects like ours would never get through.

What replaces the adviser?

If funding pools are combined, small groups will be competing directly with large national organisations. Take away the local adviser and the only thing left to compete on is how good the paperwork looks. On that measure, small communities will lose almost every time.

The question DIA must answer is this: if the regional adviser goes, what replaces their role in ensuring equity for small and remote communities? Until they can answer that, the proposal isn't ready.

What you can do, by Historic Places Aotearoa

DIA is consulting its own staff on the proposal until **8 October**, with decisions due on 21 October.

As there is no public submission process, community voices need to reach decision-makers another way. We (Historic Places Aotearoa) suggest that you can:

- Write to DIA and your local MP about what a local adviser has meant to your group
- Ask candidates where they stand, with the election coming up
- Share this with your marae, club or trust – the more people that know, the better!

This article is also based on reporting by Zoe Mills, Gisborne Herald / NZ Herald, 29 September 2026.

KĀHUI ST DAVID'S LECTURE



Audrey van Ryn
Civic Trust Auckland

Civic Trust Auckland held its winter lecture on Sunday 23 August at Kāhui St David's in Khyber Pass, Grafton, a Category A historic heritage place, whose foundation stone was laid on ANZAC Day in 1927.

Attendees enjoyed on arrival in the Great Hall the playing of Aleksy Kowalski, one of the team that has worked for the past three years to restore the 1904 Croft pipe organ.

Paul Baragwanath, the Director of the Kāhui St David's centre for music, welcomed the 60 or so Civic Trust members and locals who had come to hear about how the building was saved. He provided a generous introduction to CTA and our work in the heritage space, and to Allan Matson our president, acknowledging Allan's decades of service to Auckland, including being instrumental in the saving of St David's Memorial Church.

Allan began his copiously illustrated presentation by stating that his association with Paul and St David's started in 2013 when consultation began on the draft Auckland Unitary Plan. St David's was located within a Heritage New Zealand historic heritage area but had no protection as an individual building, so CTA included St David's in a list of 34 buildings we had nominated for Category B status, adding it in as

The Art of Remembrance Project adorning Kāhui St David's in 2015. *Photo / Friends of St David's Trust*
Kāhui Rangī Pūpū

the 35th, proposed as Category A.

Much of the prolific work of the architect of the church, Daniel Boys Patterson, was shown in Allan's slides, including a number of Auckland banks, the Giffords Building in Vulcan Lane, the Nathan Building in Fort Street, the Nathan Homestead in Manurewa, the house for Sir Frank and Lady Mappin which became Auckland's Government House, the central fire station in Pitt Street, Ellison Chambers in Wyndham Street, and St Columba in Grey Lynn.



A stained glass window dedicated to missionaries around the world, with the centre panel depicting a marae.

Photo / Supplied

Patterson designed St David's in a Roman-Gothic Revival style using Oamaru stone and Kamo brick. It contains the Sappers' Memorial Chapel, RNZE Rolls of Honour for WWI and WWII, and the RNZE Memorial Window.



Kāhui St David's in 2026, with its Kamo brick and Oamaru stone exterior. Photo / Freestyle Event Photography

When Allan passed over to Paul, he said that St David's "has been very fortunate to have Paul breathe life into it," reinventing the church as a music and events centre.

Paul presented what he called "the back story" of the saving of St David's, which he described as "my story" as well as "our story," referring to the hundreds of people who have played a part in saving the building and sustaining it into the future, a number of whom were in the audience that afternoon. He said his St David's story began in 1977 when he was baptized in the church, later attending Sunday school next door. His grandfather was the minister from 1953 to 1978.

Not having been into the church for many years, something one day in 2014 made Paul turn off at Khyber Pass. "The doors were open and I walked right through the building up into the tower, the organ loft." The minister was there and Paul introduced himself. Having assumed that the building was about to be upgraded, Paul was devastated to be told: "It will be demolished before Christmas."

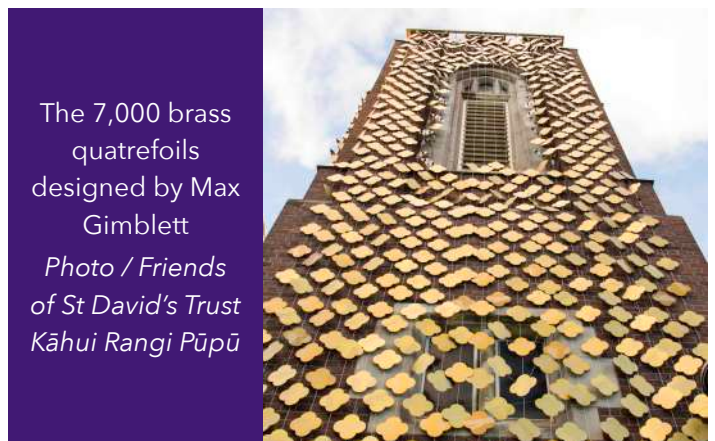
Paul felt driven to do what he could to prevent demolition of St David's. He established a friends group over a period of months. One of the group managed to fly a drone through the church to capture the interior before the public were locked out.



The interior of Kāhui St David's in 2026. Photo / Freestyle Event Photography

He played the drone footage during the lecture and a second video – both showing the need to restore the building and the need for funds to do so.

Paul outlined the challenge of keeping his own business going while generating public support and funds. He described the Art of Remembrance project: 7,000 brass quatrefoils designed by Max Gimblett hung on the outside of the church for three months in 2015, despite stormy weather, serving both as a public art work representing New Zealanders who served in World War I, and raising awareness about the building's need for major restoration. He acknowledged the contribution of Ted Manson, and that of many other financial supporters of Kāhui St David's, as well as the huge number of volunteers.



The 7,000 brass quatrefoils designed by Max Gimblett
Photo / Friends of St David's Trust
Kāhui Rangi Pūpū

Following the lecture, those present were invited to explore other parts of the building and to meet in the vestibule over a cup of tea.

This Category A historic heritage place is owned and run by Friends of St David's Trust Kāhui Rangi Pūpū, a registered charity, and is now a centre for music and the performing arts. It continues to be a gathering place where everyone is welcome. If you would like to receive invitations to events at Kāhui St David's, you can sign up on the website.

‘WELL-FUNCTIONING’ — FUTURE OF NZ HERITAGE CONSERVATION



Claire Craig
HNZPT

Resource management reform continues apace with the Planning and Natural Environment Bills making their way through Parliament, and Illustrative National Policy Direction released for public consultation.

At Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, we are especially interested in the potential of these new documents to provide opportunities for New Zealanders’ fresh engagement with historic heritage. In opening a discourse about the identification of heritage, the bills and policy direction provide us with a chance to think about this anew. The New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero remains the premier source of information about New Zealand’s heritage even as formalised information of this nature is repositioned in the new planning approach. But the door is open to evolve this framing of information into supportive new methodologies that can enhance the way we create and inspire our places and spaces while honouring our past.

The new legislation and policy direction place an emphasis on two key concepts related to historic heritage – one that is recognised within these documents and one that, as yet, is not. The first (connected) one is the concept of what is ‘significant’. The legislation and policy direction place this up for deep consideration. While our organisation has a proud history of taking responsibility for what is defined as ‘significant’ through the List, we have an equally proud history of learning from the peoples of New Zealand about what they deem to be ‘significant’. Our Statement of General Policy, and work on National Historic

Landmarks Ngā Manawhenua o Aotearoa me ōna Kōrero Tūturu, both give an engagement focus to our listing work which has ensured that identification is supported and understood. However, we deeply appreciate the enormous impact of the volume of information and understanding now available on listing methodologies. We continuously improve the currency and effectiveness of the List which remains the quality benchmark and a vital tool, and we are ready and excited to continue its evolution.

The key to what that evolution might involve, can be found in considering the second (currently unconnected) concept in the National Policy Document – “well-functioning”. This term is used in relation to both urban and rural environments, and the definitions are interesting. Neither a “well-functioning urban environment” or a “well-functioning rural environment” are defined as needing any continuity – a concept familiar to urban designers as essential for creating successful places.

Continuity can take many forms and is where historic heritage can offer so many of its most valuable qualities – such as identity, distinctiveness, and social connection. Continuity can also inspire quality new design that complements existing historic heritage and communicates that the place and its people are valued. Continuity is perhaps the key concept in why historic heritage places are said to be ‘creative wellsprings’ providing people with a strong experience of exploration and character that inspires their imagination. It is important to acknowledge that in any place, continuity and historic heritage will not always inspire positive reflections and experiences, but they will encourage another essential ingredient for the development of an effective, energised place – opportunities for discourse, engagement, and personal growth.

Reforming resource management is a Herculean task that will take the best that we can all offer. You have a chance to help the government grapple with this effectively to ensure that our places retain and evolve their continuity and that ‘significant’ historic heritage is identified in ways you support. **Please click on the following link to share your views with the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions & Transport by 16 October 2026:** [Testing the approach to National Policy Direction - Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport - Citizen Space](#)

TARANAKI HERITAGE MONTH



**Hamish Crimp
Rob Green**
Heritage Taranaki



The striking Te Whare Hononga, located at Taranaki Cathedral Church of St Mary, is a popular venue for Taranaki Heritage Month events. *Photo / Supplied*

Heritage Taranaki is pleased to announce the return of Taranaki Heritage Month for 2026. From 2nd October to 6th November 2026, Taranaki once again comes alive with stories, places and people from across the region's past.

Now in its fifth year, this region-wide celebration brings together heritage organisations, iwi and hapū, museums, libraries, historians, and community groups, to present an inspiring programme of walks, talks, exhibitions, films, and commemorative events.



The popular panel discussion is always a great start to Taranaki Heritage Month. *Photo / Supplied*

We are again opening the programme with our popular panel discussion, this year asking the

question: "Is Heritage an investment in Our Future – or a Barrier to Progress?" Chaired by director, writer and actor, Katie Wolfe, and comprising panellists Dean Raymond (Central Region Area Manager, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga); Kevin Doody (local developer); Peter Reed (heritage architect – Salmond Reed); Gina Blackburn (local councillor); Sean Zieltjes (project manager and planner); and HPA's own, Elizabeth Pishief. The panel discussion is followed the next day by a heritage building forum, examining the challenges and opportunities associated with restoration and adaptive reuse.

The opening weekend sets the tone for a programme that invites everyone to discover Taranaki's rich and diverse history. Guided walks will explore historic central Ngāmotu New Plymouth, Hāwera, Te Hēnui Awa, Marsland Hill and Te Hēnui Cemetery. Archive films, talks, exhibitions and presentations will uncover stories of pioneering families, remarkable Taranaki women, and heritage buildings.

We are extremely fortunate to have author and academic Richard Shaw (The Forgotten Coast, The Unsettled, The Good Settler) return for a wide-ranging conversation about forgotten colonial histories, selective historical amnesia, and some of

the ways in which our colonial past continues to shape our present. Shaw will be joined by Bernard Leuthart (Pou Whakahaere Tākutatanga / Clinical Director of Tui Ora).

This year Charlotte MacDonald, author and Victoria University academic, will make her Taranaki Heritage Month debut during the Landpro Speaker Event. Charlotte will discuss her recently published book *Garrison World: Redcoat Soldiers in New Zealand and across the British Empire*.

Widely praised as a landmark contribution to New Zealand's colonial history, the book has been recognised with major accolades, including the 2026 Ernest Scott Prize.



Puke Ariki, Taranaki's regional museum located in Ngāmotu New Plymouth, have again offered up a range of events for this year's programme. *Photo / Supplied*

The team at Taranaki's regional museum, Puke Ariki, have once again offered up a fantastic range of events. These include a sequel to last year's talk exploring Taranaki women's voices, a presentation sharing insights from the ongoing project to digitise and conserve the important Feaver Collection of 10,000 glass plate negatives from Ōpunakē, a talk looking at the life of colonial plantswoman Mary Mitchinson of Ngāmotu's Caledonian Nursery, and a grandparent's event to bring generations together.



The Parihaka Settlement. *Photo / Trevor Read, Taranaki-Daily-News*

The Waitara Heritage Railway trip is back by popular demand, as is the tour of Heritage Preservation, our very own cultural heritage preservation studio. A visit to Parihaka Papakāinga and a service to reflect on the 1881 invasion, as well as a commemoration of the 1860 battle of Mahoetahi to be attended by members of Ngāti Hauā, will again take place. We are even running heritage themed children's colouring competitions throughout the month!

Wherever you are in the motu, we extend an invitation to join us as we celebrate the stories that connect us, challenge us and inspire us - because understanding our past is one of the best investments we can make for our future.

A full programme of events is available on Heritage Taranaki's website: <https://heritagetaranaki.com/taranaki-heritage-month-2026/>

Keep up to date with Taranaki Heritage Month events and other heritage news on Heritage Taranaki's socials:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/heritagetaranaki/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/heritagetaranaki/>

LEST WE FORGET TO FUND OUR NATION'S MEMORY



Andy Fenton
NZ Micrographic Services

The following article, originally published in the Post – Editorial and Opinion on 19 September, was brought to our attention by the Aotearoa History and Heritage Alliance (AHHA) to which we belong.

Circa Theatre's Public Service Announcement – Election Meltdown lands sharply because its absurdity mirrors reality: just when Aotearoa New Zealand most needs reliable evidence, stronger literacy and trust in institutions, its national memory institutions face further cuts.

Te Papa, the National Library, Archives New Zealand and the wider GLAM sector are not decorative extras. They are democratic infrastructure. They preserve the evidence of government, the records of communities, the taonga of iwi and hapū, and the stories through which a country understands itself. If these institutions are essential to accountability, identity, literacy and research, why are they treated as discretionary whenever budgets tighten?

PHANZA warns that restructuring could restrict public access to history and weaken the knowledge infrastructure supporting research, innovation and informed citizenship. Archives New Zealand must preserve full and accurate public records so government can be held accountable; the National Library has legal-deposit and sector-wide legislated responsibilities, including to schools.

This matters in a country already concerned about institutional trust. New Zealand's score in the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index continues a decade-long decline. Memory institutions are not the only influence on public integrity, but strong recordkeeping, preservation and access allow citizens, journalists, researchers and Parliament to test what government has done. Repeated cuts weaken that machinery gradually, then suddenly.

Across the sector, the evidence is consistent. Historian Jonathan West describes a slow erosion of Archives New Zealand's ability to keep the state's record and enable accountability. LIANZA identifies risks to school-library support, literacy services, shared digital infrastructure, preservation, collection description and research. Museums Aotearoa chief executive Jaenine Parkinson's argument about Te Papa applies equally to the National Library and Archives New Zealand: success cannot be measured by revenue [or cost-savings] alone. It's about value to New Zealanders.

Australia offers both a warning and a precedent. After a decade of underfunding, its nine national collecting institutions faced deteriorating buildings, deficits, staff losses, reduced access and conservation backlogs. Trove, the free national discovery portal with 14 billion items from 1,000 collecting institutions, faced possible closure.

In 2023 the Australian Government responded with \$535.3 million over four years, followed by \$117 million annually from July 2027, including ongoing support for Trove. Its five-year national cultural policy, Revive, added a strategic roadmap for rebuilding cultural infrastructure.

Aotearoa New Zealand should learn before reaching the same funding cliff. Collection care, insurance, energy, digital preservation and research are expanding obligations that cannot be suspended when circumstances become difficult. Reduced access and deferred preservation compound over time, undermining earlier investment.

The practical solution is a cross-party Charter for Cultural Heritage, backed by a minimum sustainable funding model for the institutions that hold the nation's memory. Drawing on Australia's Revive, the charter should recognise the responsibilities Parliament itself created: preserving records, protecting taonga, supporting literacy, enabling research, upholding accountability and ensuring future generations inherit knowledge rather than absence. These costs need to be indexed given physical and digital collections invariably grow.

Drawing on Sohail Inayatullah, UNESCO Chair in Futures Studies, funding should link collection care and infrastructure with digital capability, workforce transformation and community engagement. Libraries and memory institutions must evolve from keepers of information into innovators and trusted truth-tellers, adopting new skills and measures of success while cultivating a knowledge garden for all. Transparent reporting on preservation, access and statutory performance should underpin this investment. The immediate ask is to pause further reductions and commission a cross-party framework beyond the electoral cycle. "More with less" is not a strategy; at some point, less becomes loss.

The sector – LIANZA, PHANZA, Museums Aotearoa, ARANZ, institutional leaders, iwi partners, researchers and communities – must make the risk visible to candidates, Ministers, boards, journalists and the public. The Circa farce returns here: a country that trims its memory institutions and calls it prudence should not be surprised when it later struggles to remember what it promised, who it served and why it mattered.

Fund the memory, or own the forgetting.

THE ELMS | TE PAPA TAURANGA



Sandra Shaw
Christchurch Civic Trust

A journal of visiting one of New Zealand's oldest heritage sites – and why you should too

Recently we travelled from Christchurch to Tauranga to house-sit for five weeks – an excellent length of time to explore an area we knew nothing about. A visit to the Information Centre gave us plenty of information and ideas about heritage places to see, and we decided on The Elms/Te Papa Tauranga, a place of early contact between Māori and Europeans.



The Elms. Photo / Sandra Shaw

The Elms/Te Papa Tauranga is one of the oldest heritage sites in New Zealand, home to a beautiful 1847 mission house, and award-winning heritage gardens.



The award-winning heritage gardens at the Elms.
Photo / Sandra Shaw

The land itself has a rich history, and dates back to pre-European times, when it was known as Ōtamataha Pā, a thriving community and landing place for waka. The pā was abandoned following an inter-tribal attack.

In the 1830s, local Māori chiefs invited the Church Missionary Society to establish a mission there under the leadership of Reverend Alfred Nesbit Brown. The attractive Georgian/Regency style house was built in 1847 from Kauri logs rafted down from the Coromandel and pit-sawn on site. It originally had wooden shingles, but like many buildings of its era, these have since been replaced with corrugated iron.

In 1873, Alfred Brown and his second wife purchased the mission house and renamed The Elms after the many beautiful trees on the property. It was their home for many years. I personally loved the preserved dining room, where military officers dined the night before the Battle of Gate Pā (April 28th, 1864) many of whom died the following day. Also in the grounds is a small building called The Library (1838), where one of the five Treaty of Waitangi documents is believed to have been signed, although it cannot be said for certain which building this happened in.



The Library. Photo / Sandra Shaw

The house remained in the family's hands until 1997, with The Elms Foundation taking over ownership of the property in 1999. It is now preserved as a precious public heritage resource. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to The Elms/Te Papa and I encourage anyone visiting Tauranga to enjoy the wonderful home and gardens.

#2009 — THE LAST OF AUCKLAND'S 'BENDY BUSES' LIVES ON



Civic Trust Auckland has recently given a donation towards the restoration of bendy bus #2009 – the last of the fleet of 20 MAN bendy buses that the Auckland Regional Authority purchased and operated. *Photo / ARA Heritage Buses*



Audrey van Ryn
Civic Trust Auckland

With a name that sounds like a bus with loads of character that might feature in a rollicking children's story, a bendy bus was a common sight in Auckland from 1983 until 2013, becoming an icon of the city.

The bus in question, #2009, a 1983 MAN SG220, is currently stationed in a yard in Helensville, West Auckland, awaiting further adventures. She is the last of the fleet of 20 MAN bendy buses that the Auckland Regional Authority purchased and operated, the first fleet of its kind in New Zealand.

2009 spent most of her working life associated with the Wiri depot on Norman Spencer Drive in South Auckland. She served the city streets until her retirement in 2013.

Then Dave Marsden of Coachways, through much effort and personal expenditure, brought 2009 back to the road, and, from 2018 until late 2024, she ferried children, rugby supporters, and bus enthusiasts to and fro.

The Vintage Omnibus Preservation Group then stepped in, and, with the help of Councillor Mike Lee and many others, saved 2009 from being scrapped. She is now in the hands of ARA Heritage Buses, who are working on rebuilding her body and engine to get her running again. On their website you can see her in action.

ARA Heritage Buses owns examples of other Auckland Regional Authority buses. The first bus they purchased was the MAN SL200 #1662. The current fleet includes #582 from NZBus; Waiheke Bus Company #210, a 1994 MAN 11.190; and Auckland's first Mercedes O305 #301.

ARA Heritage Buses is an incorporated society established in 2019 to recognize Auckland's great transport heritage, and to restore former ARA buses for the general public to enjoy, including for events and special occasions. As they say: "The humble bus invokes fond memories of the past ... they brought us together through leisure, school or work."

The organisation is keen for others to become involved to support their work and their goals, perhaps by becoming members or by tapping into those with relevant knowledge, including from the bus and coach industry.

Civic Trust Auckland has recently given a donation towards the restoration of bendy bus #2009.

Meanwhile, Wellington is planning in 2027 to introduce new bendy buses – also known as EAVs: electric articulated vehicles – to serve about 10,000 passengers travelling each workday between Karori and Courtenay Place. Two trials were conducted with articulated buses in 2023 and 2025. Double-deckers can't fit through the Karori and Seatoun tunnels, so bendy buses are seen as the solution.

HERITAGE FESTIVALS AROUND THE MOTU



David Watt
HNZPT Outreach

Get ready for a busy time across Taranaki and the greater Wellington Region when annual Heritage Festivals open in October. Taranaki Heritage Month runs from Friday 2 October until Friday 6 November and the Wellington Regional Festival from 24 October to 15 November.

Taranaki Festival coordinator, Rob Green says heritage is more than old buildings or treasured artifacts. It is the stories, places and people who have shaped who we are and continue to influence the future of our communities.

Heritage Month opens with a thought-provoking public panel discussion entitled "Heritage Investment in Our Future- or a Barrier to Progress?" Chaired by award-winning writer, producer and director, Katie Wolfe, the panel will bring together voices from heritage, architecture, planning, property development and iwi leadership to explore one of the most important conversations facing the Taranaki region today.

Guided talks include historic New Plymouth, Hāwera, Te Hēnui Awa and Cemetery and Marshland Hill. Archive films talks and exhibitions will uncover stories of pioneering families, remarkable Taranaki women, heritage buildings and local communities.

Rob says there will be an opportunity to hear the story of Parihaka and Mahoetahi that encourage reflection on defining moments in our shared history.

This year's Wellington Heritage Festival will include more than 165 events throughout the greater Wellington region from Kapiti to Wellington, the Hutt Valley and the Wairarapa.

Festival Director Alex Hockley says, "What matters most for us is not the number of events, but building a strong, stable and sustainable Kaupapa that communities across Te Upoko-o-te-Ika-a-Maui see as their own and the scale and diversity of our 2026 festival shows that these partnerships continue to grow".

The Festival will open at Te Papa Tongarewa, in partnership with the Multicultural Council of Wellington with performance and cultural presentations and will close at Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre, Mt Bruce, just north of Masterton, in partnership with Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa. The Wairarapa in general will see more growth around the heritage festival with over 30 events in the Featherston Heritage Festival alone and partnered events sharing mana whenua stories.

"The Festival programme demonstrates how broad heritage can be. People can explore urban nature around Te Papa, experience sunset stargazing at Stonehenge Aotearoa near Carterton, help to contribute to Wikipedia's mana whenua and local history stories in Pōneke, or explore the histories of Aotearoa's artists at Toi Mahara in Waikanae," says Alex.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga staff are managing a significant number of events for this year's Festival, including presentations at Antrim House on the history of the SS Ventnor which will have its 125th celebrations next year, on brickmaking in Wellington in the 19th and early 20th centuries, curious archaeology around

Wellington, and an archaeology walking tour on the Wellington waterfront; a presentation on the history of Chinese settlement and business in Lower Hutt; a tour of the late 19th century goldfield sites at Terawhiti Station, Wellington; festival activities at Old St Pauls; a Pencarrow Lighthouse tour; visit to the Upper Hutt Blockhouse; Old Government Buildings, which shortly celebrates 150 years and walking tours.

The Wellington Heritage Festival events programme is now live!

Go to the Wellington Heritage Festival website: www.wellingtonheritagefestival.co.nz to see the full range of events and booking details.

AUCKLAND HERITAGE FESTIVAL



AUCKLAND HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Tastes of Tāmaki: A Heritage Feast

Discover Auckland

Tastes of Tāmaki: A Heritage Feast

Auckland Heritage Festival returns, celebrating Tāmaki Makaurau's food stories, traditions and cultural heritage.



Various locations around the region



26 September to 11 October

Discover stories of migration, manaakitanga, innovation and community through talks, tours, exhibitions, performances and family-friendly activities across Auckland. Many events are free or low-cost, making it an easy way to experience the city's heritage in new and unexpected ways.

From historic neighbourhoods to treasured recipes and local food traditions, the festival offers a fresh look at the stories that continue to shape Tāmaki Makaurau.

" SWAG "



A swag, in architecture and decoration, is a carved ornamental motif consisting of stylized flowers, fruit, foliage, and cloth, tied together with ribbons that sag in the middle and are attached at both ends. The distinction is sometimes made between a swag and a festoon by limiting the former to festoons entirely made up of folds of cloth.

ARCHITECTURAL TERMS EXPLAINED

The swag, or festoon, usually carved from wood or marble, or sometimes modelled in plaster in heavy relief, is a prominent decorative motif in all classical architecture and decoration. It was freely used by both the ancient Greeks and Romans. It was also especially popular among decorators of the Renaissance, many of whom also employed painted swags. The ends of the swag are sometimes held by carved animals, such as bulls or lions, or they may simply be tied into bows with the ribbon ends hanging down.

HERITAGE

HE REO MO NGĀ TAONGA TUKU IHO

VOICES

2026 SPRING
NEWSLETTER

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