

Editorial: Rumours, resignations and ructions at Archives New Zealand

Theresa Graham

Aims, Goals & Objectives of ARANZ

The objectives of the Association are:

- To foster the care, preservation and use of archives and records, both to public and private, and their effective administration.
- To provide an authoritative voice on matters of concern relating to archives and records.
- To maintain and increase public awareness of the importance of archives and records in all matters affecting their preservation and use.
- To cooperate or affiliate with any other bodies in New Zealand or elsewhere with like objectives.
- To promote professional competence in the administration and preservation of archives and records; by providing advice to the appropriate authorities on levels and standards of professional education and training, and by promoting the training of archivists, records keepers, curators, librarians and others by the dissemination of specialised knowledge.
- To encourage research on the care, preservation and use of archives and records and to promote the publication of the results of this research.
- To promote the standing of archives institutions and those working with archives and records.
- To advise and support the establishment of archives services throughout New Zealand.
- To publish a journal and other publications in furtherance of these objectives.

With New Zealand's lead government archive and record keeping agency in the gun as it has been in the last few months, I have been considering how ARANZ as a professional and independent association with the above aims, goals and objectives, can best assist and respond to recent

concerning events.

The story as I understand it so far, gleaned mainly from media releases is:

Approved by Cabinet in August 2009, the **Digital Continuity Action Plan** was launched with the aim of ensuring that today's public sector information is available tomorrow. The plan was developed as an all-out-public sector programme to support agencies with storing, accessing, using and reusing digital information that they produced. ANZ led the implementation and in 2010 secured government funding for the development of a digital archiving capability.

In December 2013 Labour's Grant Robertson obtained a leaked official report on the programme which revealed a cost overrun and a delay of up to five years for project completion. Internal Affairs Minister Chris Tremain confirmed that the programme had been put on hold since February 2013 and that *millions of dollars of taxpayers' money* for the digital archive system has not been well spent.

Internal Affairs Chief Executive Colin McDonald noted that world governments were grappling with the huge problem of how to cope with "a massive influx of digital information. We're taking a look at what we do next" he said. (Otago Daily Times 12 December 2013)

In December 2013 a review into Archives New Zealand's two main initiatives was announced; the Digital Continuity programme and the Active Archives project, which was designed to relocate the Treaty of Waitangi.

It is expected that the review will:

- examine, in respect of each initiative, how the issues arose and the cause
- assess the capacity and capability of Archives New Zealand to carry out and implement its planned programmes and initiatives
- identify and assess any opportunities and risks arising from the findings of the review
- make any recommendations for change that are required to address any issues or problems identified
- consider any other relevant issues, and make recommendations as how they should be addressed.

In February this year Chief Archivist Greg Goulding unexpectedly resigned and Marilyn Little was swiftly appointed to the role of Chief Archivist and General Manager for a twelve month period. In March DIA Deputy Chief Executive Sue Powell in turn announced her resignation as

of May to pursue a career in the private sector. I understand that at the time of writing this, the senior management team of ANZ does not include a professional archivist.

As ARANZ President I have been kept informed of these changes, with notification just prior to the announcement of the review and subsequent resignations. In February John Timmins and I met with Sue Powell. We expressed the concern of ARANZ members at the sudden resignation of Chief Archivist Greg Goulding. We emphasised the need for strong and effective leadership at Archives New Zealand and that the executive team required professional depth. Sue responded that the swift secondment of Marilyn Little was made in order to ensure continuity of leadership. Sue confirmed that she has made the recruitment of a Director of Client Capability position her immediate priority, following the recent resignation of John Roberts. Since then I have been invited to meet with Marilyn Little and the Archives Council in the near future.

It is in no-one's interest to have a demoralised and hamstrung Archives New Zealand. I am encouraged that the lines of communication are open between our association and the DIA. It is a government agency that we in the archives and records management community look to for guidance, leadership and inspiration. We have benefited from that in the past and expect to continue to do so into the future, digital or otherwise.