

Kōkiri

The National Library of New Zealand
Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa

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Cover image of the National Library of New Zealand by Mark Beatty.

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Photo caption

National Librarian Te Pouhuaki Rachel Esson stands in front of the new archival building, Te Rua, with Chief Archivist Poumanaaki Anahera Morehu. Photo by Mark Beatty (or Max Olijnyk).

From the National Librarian

Significant anniversaries offer an opportunity to look back at our history, recognise where we are now and consider our commitment to future generations.

Our National Library has developed and changed over time, from the Country Library Service delivering wicker baskets of books to rural and remote communities, to digitised collections available online anywhere for everyone. In the last year alone, 23.3 million of our online collection items were accessed.

We are now taking part in large-scale collaborative activities with international impact while also strengthening local communities to collect, and care for, taonga tuku iho.

As I consider the role of our National Library, and my own role of National Librarian, or Pouhuaki, I am struck by the

importance of being a trusted national institution and our role to hold, protect and make available information that truly reflects our society. This comes with challenges as we are seeing the worldwide impact of mis and disinformation. We need increased transparency for our work and to ensure we play an active role, alongside Archives New Zealand, for our citizens to have access to accurate information.

My te reo Māori title, ‘Pouhuaki’, is a unique and original compound word that illuminates the role of the National Librarian. Pou – the post – is a symbol of support. Huaki means to open and to uncover, to reveal.

I have a responsibility to be a librarian and a leader who shares the stories the Library has and that we are responsible for taking care of. It’s inspiring, it’s a privilege and it comes with significant expectations to

be a mentor and a stalwart; to protect, preserve and share the nation's memories for the people of New Zealand and beyond – making trusted sources of information accessible now and into the future.

The completion of Te Rua, the new archival building in the parliamentary precinct in Wellington, and the link bridge connecting to Te Puna, the National Library, have created a heritage campus – called Te Kahu – in our capital city. Our new structure, bringing the institutions under the joint leadership of the National Librarian and Chief Archivist, will support our institutions to improve the public's access to services, resources and expertise.

Our aspiration to grow a nation of readers, like much of our work, requires collaboration so we can build capability, awareness and support while working with many partners. National Library initiatives such as Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador, Poets Laureate and Pūtoi Rito Communities of Readers, demonstrate that

the written and spoken word are highly important to us and always will be.

What you will see in this publication is the importance we also place on collecting other materials such as music, art, architectural plans, maps, photographs, comics and cartoons, audiovisual items and ephemera to support research and learning.

The title of this publication, *Kōkiri*, comes from the National Library waiata composed by Bella Tarawhiti. Bella is our national taonga who has been a Kaiārahi (guide) at the Library for 36 years. The lyrics of the waiata ask us to 'Open the doors of the Library / So that we may work together... To search the collections ... A wealth of resources'. I hope the small selection of highlights we are sharing here inspire you to do just that. You can read the full lyrics of *Kōkiri* online at:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/about-us>

Rachel Esson, National Librarian
Te Pouhuaki, 2025. Our history and spaces



Photo caption (previous page):

Behind the scenes at the National Library. Photo by Mark Beatty.

The National Library of New Zealand was established in 1965 when the General Assembly Library (now the Parliamentary Library), the Alexander Turnbull Library, and the National Library Service (comprising the Country Library Service, the School Library Service and the National Bibliographic Centre) were brought together by the National Library Act 1965.

Today, the National Library has three distinct collections. These are the research collections (including the Alexander Turnbull Library collections), the General Collection (originating from the Country Library Service) and the Schools Collection. Our collections and services are increasingly digital and digitised – these are technology-

enabled services that support libraries and library users wherever they may be.

The National Library’s mission to 2030 is to create cultural and economic value for New Zealanders through leadership and collaboration. We aim to remove barriers to knowledge, ensure New Zealanders have the skills to create knowledge and preserve knowledge for future generations.

Wellington’s National Library building was designed in the Brutalist style during the early 1970s and is part of the New Zealand Parliamentary Precinct. The architecture of the building is said to have been influenced by the design of the Boston City Hall in the United States.

Work began on the inverted pyramid design in 1974 but was suspended for five years from 1976 due to funding constraints, industrial issues, and design changes. In 1987, when construction was completed, staff and collections from 14 sites around Wellington were brought together in the new building.

In December 2009, the National Library building in Molesworth Street closed to the public to allow for redevelopment. This work allowed the Library to modernise the way visitors accessed collections with new integrated reading rooms. Importantly, it also fixed the leaky roof, ensuring the irreplaceable heritage collections remained safe. The research collections were made available in the new reading rooms in August 2012.

Today, a stunning new archival building, called Te Rua, has become an unmissable feature of Aitken Street in Wellington. This unique building is seamlessly connected to Te Puna, the National Library building, by a

two-level link bridge. Our heritage campus, Te Kahu, encompasses Te Rua and Te Puna.

Te Kahu sits inside the historic Pipitea Pā site. The pā site was established in about 1824–1825 by Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama, and Te Āti Awa who migrated to the area as part of the Nihoputa expedition. Pipitea Pā occupied about 2.5 hectares of land and had extensive cultivation areas surrounding it.

Our campus represents the establishment of collaborative ways of working for National Library and Archives New Zealand within these new, shared spaces. Staff from Archives and some staff from the National Library have now moved into the new building, and it will open to the public in early 2026.

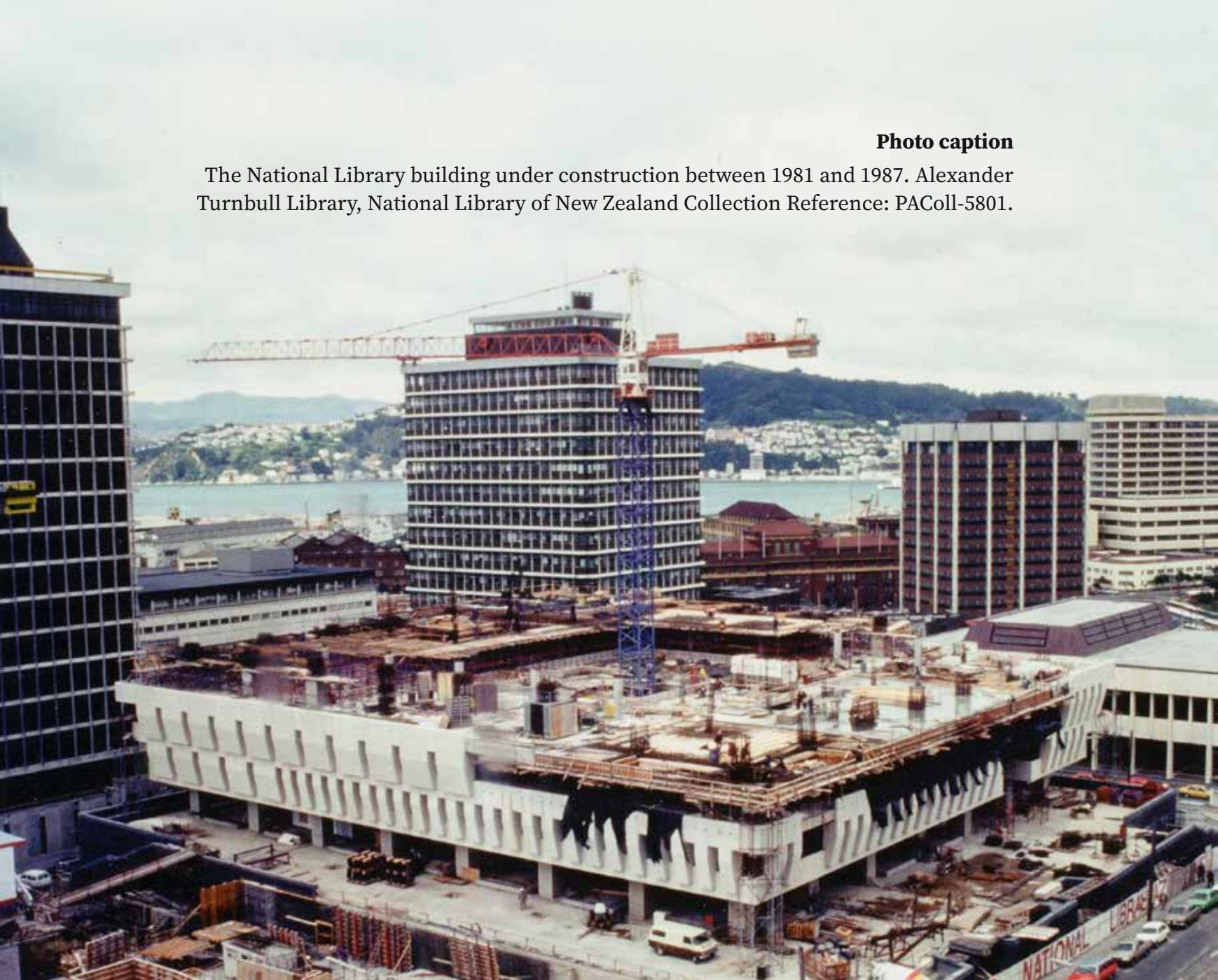


Photo caption

The National Library building under construction between 1981 and 1987. Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand Collection Reference: PAColl-5801.

How your support helps

We are grateful for the support of generous friends and donors – this booklet highlights many inspiring examples. You too can support the Library and preserve New Zealand's stories. Your generosity will enrich lives and inspire future discoveries. You can make a financial donation, become a friend or offer us collection material.

The National Library is supported by the Friends of the Turnbull Library, the Friends of the Dorothy Neal White Collection, Te Puna Foundation and the Turnbull Endowment Trust. Donations and bequests fund grants for research and training, as well as lectures, publications, and exhibitions.

The Friends of the Dorothy Neal White Collection supports the Library's children's literature collections through events, publications and a scholarship. The Friends of the Turnbull Library work to promote the

Turnbull Library's collections and support research and use of these collections.

Support from Te Puna Foundation enables the National Library to provide engaging and inspiring education programmes; collect, preserve and make collections available to all; support initiatives to grow a nation of readers; and host unique exhibitions and events. The Turnbull Endowment Trust supports access to and interpretation of the Library's collections and funds grants for research, training, publications, and exhibitions in support of this aim.

Find out more on our website:
<https://natlib.govt.nz/support-us>

Collaborating for success

The National Library's purpose is to collect, preserve and protect the documentary heritage of New Zealand and overseas. Our secondary role is to aid in the work of other libraries and collaborate with other institutions that form the international library community.

We do not work in isolation. Our reach into communities and to support the library sector is enabled by many collaborative partnerships. Partnerships are also crucial for our literacy initiatives such as Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador, the AnyQuestions service and Communities of Readers. A partnership with our colleagues

at Archives New Zealand and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision enabled Utaina, a massive audio-visual digitisation project.

Increasingly, significant additions to our collections have included the step of digitisation – in partnership with donors, creators, and the creative sector – as part of the acquisition process. This makes our new acquisitions far more widely available to researchers and protects fragile items from handling. The work is often challenging, being large in scale and rapid by necessity. Recent examples include donations from Ans Westra, the Flying Nun record label and the whānau of architect John Scott.

Photo caption

Imaging technician, Llewelyn Jones, works with the Flying Nun collection. Photo by Mark Beatty.

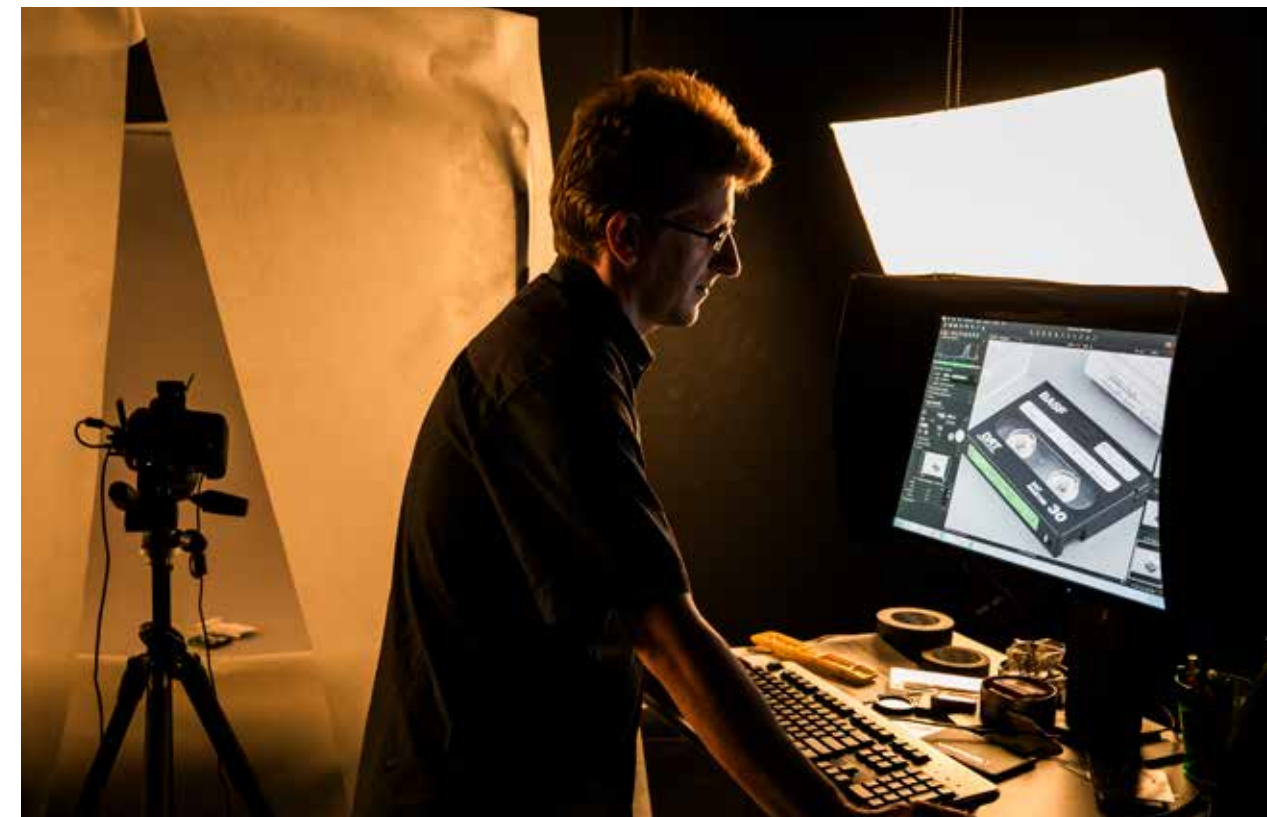




Photo caption

Lynley Gudgeon, Digitisation Programme Assistant (left) and Charlotte McGillen, Digitisation Adviser, reviewing *New Zealand Listener* issues for digitisation.
Photo by Mark Beatty.

Papers Past partnerships

While physical objects are the backbone of our collections, we also need to support the wider library sector and researchers through the global shift to digital, the changing nature of research, and expectations for public access.

In 2003, the National Library of New Zealand Act was passed providing the mandate for the Library to begin collecting and preserving New Zealand's digital heritage in ways that ensure current and future access. The following year, we launched our National Digital Heritage Archive project, the foundation for our digital preservation programme.

Collaborations are key to growing our digital collecting capability. We work with organisations, community groups and individuals to digitise heritage newspaper, magazine and journal titles. Much of this work is invisible to many New

Zealanders but is still a significant part of our mandate to support the wider library sector – three million New Zealanders benefit directly from this work.

The National Library of New Zealand is world leading in its digital preservation capability. Our digitisation work is much bigger than the sum of its parts. It extends our reach across New Zealand and the world and helps us keep pace in a rapidly evolving information age.

Our annual collaborative digitisation programme began in 2010, working with libraries, community groups and smaller cultural heritage organisations to make newspapers of local interest available through our online collection, Papers Past.

To date, this has allowed the Library to digitise more than three million newspaper pages with partners covering 50 percent of the digitisation costs.

Nearly 40 percent of all the newspaper pages on Papers Past have been digitised in partnership with our wider sector.

As a result of our partnership agreements, all major regional newspapers have now been added to Papers Past up to 1945. Partnering with the Preserving Local History and Education Trust has enabled us to extend the coverage of all regional newspapers on Papers Past up to 1945, including the recent mammoth task of adding *Marlborough Express* issues from 1929 to 1952 to the collection.

Previously, the *Marlborough Express* was only available on Papers Past up to the 1920s. We're delighted that the partnership with the trust and their work with Marlborough Museum has enabled us to fill this gap. Other partnerships we develop are with publishers, who give us permission to digitise their in-copyright material. Recently, we partnered with Are Media to begin work on digitising two iconic magazines.

The *New Zealand Listener* magazine began its life back in 1939 as the *Journal of the National Broadcasting Service*, with a printed weekly radio programme. When television reached our shores, in June 1960, the *Listener* began publishing weekly TV listings alongside articles, editorials, letters to the editor and reviews.

Now, titles from the first issue in 1939 through to 2018 of the magazine are being digitised and released in tranches on Papers Past, with the first 20 years released this year.

New Zealand's longest running magazine, the *NZ Woman's Weekly*, is also being digitised. Still in circulation, the magazine was first published in 1932. Researchers will be able to search right from the first issue of the *NZ Woman's Weekly*, where prominent topics included royalty, celebrity, fashion, beauty and recipes – topics that are still popular today.

You can search the Papers Past collection online at: <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>



Photo caption

Ans Westra at the opening of the Pūkana exhibition at the National Library in 2019. Photo by Mark Beatty.

Seeing ourselves

Ans Westra is one of our best-known social documentary photographers. We are enriched by her images and enduringly grateful for her generosity in donating her work to the country. Ans began donating her photographs and other material to the Library in the early 1980s to ensure preservation and long-term access to her work. Working with our curators, she continued to make subsequent donations for many years.

Over the last ten years we have worked with her agents through Suite Gallery to digitise the negatives and make these invaluable images freely available to the public. Her collection of tens of thousands of film negatives and printed proof sheets is one of the largest by a single photographer in the Turnbull collection.

Music memories

Flying Nun Records is New Zealand's internationally best-known record label. They donated their master tape archive to the National Library in 2018, with some artists also contributing recordings. One of the label's most prominent artists, Chris Knox, donated his tape archive in 2019. In total, these two collections contain around 1,600 recordings on many different formats.

The Flying Nun Project aims to digitally preserve and photograph these items and make them accessible for research and for reissues. This complex task has entailed acquiring and restoring vintage playback equipment to enable the work. By the end of 2024, around 1,130 items had been fully preserved and made available.

The Library's high-quality audio transfers have already been used for numerous reissues, including records by The Clean, Tall Dwarfs, The Chills, Headless Chickens, and The 3Ds; various recordings were also

used for the recent documentary, *Life in One Chord*, about musician Shayne P. Carter (Straitjacket Fits, Dimmer). The Library can now provide access to Flying Nun Records multitrack tapes in the Wellington Reading Room, which we expect will stimulate more research into the label.

Photo caption

Specialist Conservator, Nick Guy, works on the Flying Nun master tapes.
Photo by Mark Beatty.



Photo caption

Plans from the John Scott Collection. Photo by Mark Beatty

It takes a team

In 2020, the Library welcomed the John Scott archive of architectural records into the Turnbull Library collections. John Scott was an influential mid-20th century New Zealand architect with a national and international reputation for innovative designs incorporating Māori and traditional colonial concepts. His designs include the Futuna Chapel in Karori, Wellington.

As part of the acquisition, the Library made a commitment to the Scott whānau to digitise the collection. Before digitisation could take place, the Library needed to preserve, arrange and describe the collection – a large amount of which needed conservation treatment. To carry out this work, we assembled archivists, a librarian and a conservator – bringing the processing, conservation, and digitisation functions together into one team to rapidly make the collection accessible.

Because the plans and drawings needed to be as flat as possible to be digitised, stabilisation was the conservation priority. This required treatments to repair and strengthen items to enable copying, handling, access, and storage.

The Library worked with digitisation partners Heritage Studios to create high-resolution digital images of every plan, photograph, and manuscript in the collection – more than 20,000 images in total.

The images were captured on a bespoke capture station using a non-contact, camera-based digitisation system. Using this system, Heritage Studios were able to capture an impressive 60 to 90 plans per day. Files were transferred to the Library in batches and given technical appraisal and quality assurance checks before being loaded to the National Digital Heritage Archive.

Once digitised, online access copies were created so that the originals could be put into climate-controlled, long-term storage.

The Alexander Turnbull Library appreciates the generosity of individuals, whānau and organisations, whose gifts enrich our collections for the benefit of researchers everywhere. Find out how to offer material to the Alexander Turnbull Library on our website:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/collections/donations>

Photo caption

Conservation Technician, George Gibson-Harris, works on a plan in the collection. Photo by Mark Beatty.





Photo caption

Logistics co-ordinator, Zak Argabrite, holds an album of shellac recordings. Photo by Mark Beatty.

A race against time

Utaina (currently the largest audiovisual digitisation project in the world) saw us work in partnership with Archives New Zealand and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision over four years to rapidly digitise and preserve over 400,000 AV items into formats the public can access and use.

The vast scale, coupled with limited time, was a challenge as more than 95 percent of at-risk content could have been lost in less than a decade if not digitised, due to the obsolete media formats. The project, completed in 2025, needed to design new processes and customise tools, while working closely with digitisation partner, Memnon.

For the Library, this project has resulted in more than 70,000 audiovisual items successfully digitised and now preserved in our digital preservation system. This in turn has made the Library's recorded collections, including music and oral histories, much more accessible.

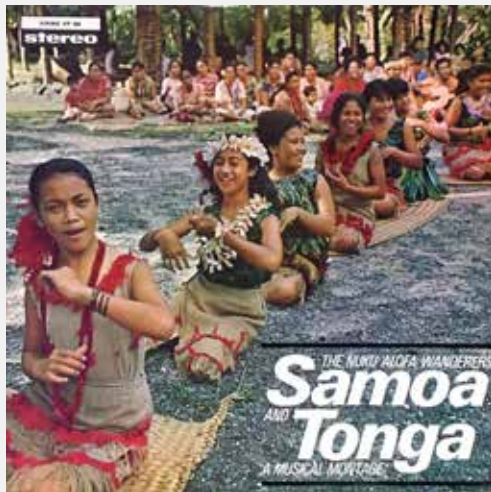
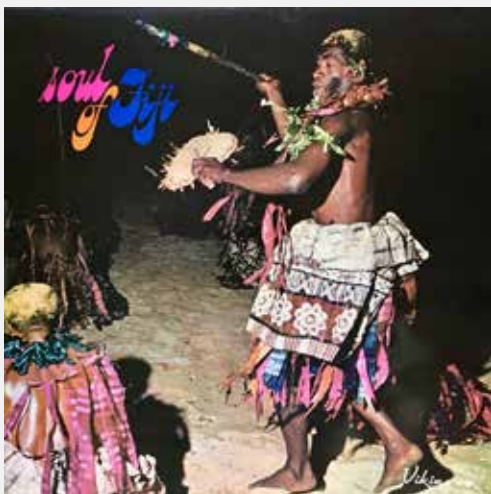


Photo caption

Album covers from the Viking Sevenses collection. Images reproduced with permission.



Partnering for Pasifik music

The New Zealand record label Viking Records was heavily involved with releasing Pacific music from the late 1950s until the early 1980s. Their catalogue also includes New Zealand pop artists such as Dinah Lee and Peter Posa, brass bands, country singers and Māori cultural groups.

Viking Sevenses, as the label is now known, began donating its master tapes to the Alexander Turnbull Library in 2015. This collection now comprises one of the largest groups of master tapes in our Archive of New Zealand Music.

Digitalpasifik is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia and implemented by the National Library of New Zealand in collaboration with the National Library of Australia. It is an online platform enabling people in and of the Pacific to see, discover and explore items of digitised cultural heritage that are held in collections around the world.

In 2024, Viking Sevenses became a partner of Digital Pasifik. Now, almost 900 Pacific music tracks reissued on YouTube by Viking are available for people to discover through the Digital Pasifik website – with more to follow. You can find music

of interest by searching for keywords and filtering by location. Explore the collection online at: digitalpasifik.org

Thanks to the Te Puna Foundation and Air New Zealand, you can now take a journey through New Zealand's and Polynesia's rich musical heritage with the *In the Vault* playlist, available to all passengers on long-haul Air New Zealand flights and on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@NationalLibraryNZ/playlists>

In the Vault is presented in association with the labels Atoll, Viking, Flying Nun Records and Video Pacific Communications. Partnering with the corporate community is crucial to achieving Te Puna Foundation's goals. Your commitment to an annual gift or sponsorship of a one-off event helps us to deliver on our vision to share more of our precious taonga.

Empowering communities

Enabling access isn't always about digitisation. Vicki-Anne Heikell (MNZM), Te Whānau-ā-Āpanui, is the Iwi and Community Preservation Advisor in our Community Engagement and Learning Directorate. She leads Te Pūranga – a programme of work that supports iwi, hapū and community archivists to strengthen their knowledge and confidence to care for their collections in their own spaces.

Vicki-Anne's work takes her into the community, providing face-to-face support and advice regarding the preservation of documentary heritage collections. Her day-to-day work is a balancing act between providing this advice and being able to step back for an overview to identify the key preservation issues and which ones we are best placed to support.

Iwi organisations are increasingly interested in using resources to enrich

their communities through exhibitions, research spaces, and online hubs.

Every community I work with is interested in preserving their stories. I enjoy listening to their stories; I enjoy seeing the physical item come to life when it is alongside a descendant. I used to say, 'Preservation is access.' I tend now to say, 'Access is preservation'. That's what engagement reveals each time I work with community. – **Vicki-Anne Heikell.**

Te Pūranga is supported by the National Preservation Office Te Tari Tohu Taonga at the National Library. It is a cross-agency endeavour with support from Archives New Zealand, the National Library, Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision and Te Papa National Services Te Paerangi. It received additional funding from the International Council of Archives, Turnbull Endowment Trust and Archives and Records Association of New Zealand.



Photo caption

Ria Waikerepuru, Taranaki; and Vicki-Anne Heikell, Te Whānau-ā-Āpanui connect at an Iwi Archivist Symposium. Photo by Mark Beatty.



Paintings in Perpetuity

It may come as a surprise to many that the National Library houses the largest collection of art in New Zealand. While paintings on paper are treated within the Library, oil paintings are kept safe and stable when they come into our care but are not typically restored.

The Paintings in Perpetuity programme, a Turnbull Endowment Trust-led initiative, seeks funding and supports specialist conservation treatment of oil paintings in the collection. Four significant paintings recently received conservation treatment, frame improvements and glazing – *Lady Stout* by A. F. Nicoll (funded with support from the Stout Trust); a *Portrait of Isabella Turnbull* (sister of Alexander Turnbull) by J. Horsburgh; and *White Terraces*, and *Pink Terraces* by Charles Blomfield. The team will also be completing some smaller glazing and framing projects supported by the programme.

The trust also contributed generously to the treatment and mounting of Katherine Mansfield's embroidered silk shawl for the 2024 exhibition – *A child of the sun: Katherine Mansfield's last year*. Lady Ottoline Morrell, of the Bloomsbury set, gave the treasured shawl to Mansfield for Christmas 1917, and also gave one to Virginia Woolf. Specialist textile conservators worked on-site to complete the work, which had the added benefit of improving existing storage of and access to the shawl. Find out more about the Turnbull Endowment Trust and how you can get involved on their website: <https://turnbulltrust.org.nz>

Photo caption

Paintings in storage, behind the scenes at the National Library.
Photo by Mark Beatty.

Lilburn Research Fellowship: Research & creation

The biennial Lilburn Research Fellowship encourages scholarly research leading to publication on an aspect of New Zealand and music, using the resources of the Archive of New Zealand Music and other Library collections. The Fellowship is funded by the Lilburn Trust, which is in turn managed by the Turnbull Library Endowment Trust. It was established by a bequest from composer Douglas Lilburn in 1984, with the National Library providing research support.

The Lilburn Research Fellow for 2025 is Professor Samantha Owens, a musicologist. She is researching and writing a book on the history of brass bands in New Zealand from 1842 to 1920. The recipient for the

Lilburn Research Fellowship 2023 was writer, musician, and broadcaster Nick Bollinger. He used the Fellowship for research toward a book on culture, class, and identity in New Zealand music.

Leaving a bequest such as this ensures a legacy for future generations. By choosing to make a gift to Te Puna Foundation, or the Turnbull Endowment Trust, in your Will, you are supporting the National Library to meet its goal of collecting, connecting, and co-creating knowledge to power New Zealand. Find out more about bequests on our website: <https://natlib.govt.nz/support-us/te-puna-foundation/donate-te-puna-foundation>



Photo caption

Douglas Lilburn.
Photograph taken by Chris Black. [1960s]. The Douglas Lilburn Collection.
Ref: PAColl-7737-3-01.
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.



Photo caption

Poet Laureates at the celebration of 25 years of the award. Back row left to right: Brian Turner, Bill Manhire, Jenny Bornholdt, Selina Tusitala Marsh, David Eggleton. Front row left to right, Cilla McQueen, Ian Wedde, Elizabeth Smither, Vincent O'Sullivan. Photo by Mark Beatty.

Poet Laureate

The National Library plays an important role not just in collecting New Zealand literature, but also in promoting and supporting literary creation and appreciation.

The role of the New Zealand Poet Laureate is shaped by the skills and experience each appointed poet brings to the position but always includes the creation of new work and participation in poetry-related activities. The Laureates serve a three-year term, during which they work to raise awareness of the value of reading and writing poetry.

Laureates receive a cash award and a stipend of wine from Te Mata Estate, and each has a personalised tokotoko created for them by Haumoana artist Jacob Scott. The custom of awarding a Poet Laureate wine originates from a tradition that began in 1630 of the UK Poet Laureate receiving a large cask of fortified wine.

The National Library works with our Laureates to archive their creative work and processes within the Alexander Turnbull Library, facilitate the use of the collections and host events. The Library also partners with festivals to help our Laureates spread the word about poetry. We are proud to administer the award, an investment of time that reflects the National Library's role as the wakahuia of poetry and literature in New Zealand.

Our Poet Laureate Award has developed māna and gained recognition internationally, with Chris Tse, Poet Laureate 2022–25, playing an advisory role as Australia establishes its own Poet Laureate Award. Chris and Selina Tusitala Marsh, Poet Laureate 2017–19, also participated in literary events around the world.

Closer to home the Laureates, together with of the Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassadors, have become significant contributors in our rich literary landscape. In August 2025, Robert Sullivan was

appointed as the fourteenth Poet Laureate, destined to further enrich the proud tradition of this prestigious award.

Our Laureates post updates about their work and activities on the Poet Laureate website: <http://www.poetlaureate.org.nz>

Photo caption

Previous Poet Laureate, Chris Tse. Photo supplied.





Photo caption

All young people
can enjoy reading.
Photo by Jacob
Wackerhausen.

Literacy and Learning

National Library Services to Schools empowers school and kura communities by providing nationwide services that promote and support literacy, learning and library development. Services to Schools' vision is that young people of Aotearoa New Zealand thrive as curious, motivated, and skilled learners and readers.

As well as providing access to high-quality teaching, library and learning resources to support curricula and diverse learning needs. We also offer advice and professional learning to help improve school library services. Collaboration and partnerships are at the forefront of our projects to engage young readers and to support better literacy outcomes for young people

AnyQuestions?

Navigating today's complex digital landscape requires strong media and information literacy skills. AnyQuestions is a free virtual reference service where school-aged students can chat with librarian professionals, giving them access to reliable information and age-appropriate resources.

The AnyQuestions service was established by National Library's Services to Schools with public library partners, the Ministry of Education and SLANZA (School Library Association New Zealand Aotearoa). The service helps students develop the research and critical thinking tools they need to confidently access, evaluate and use information online.

Students log in to the AnyQuestions website and can chat in real-time and one-on-one with a librarian during the service's operating hours. We aim to provide a safe and supportive environment

for students to become more confident and independent researchers.

Staffed by librarians from right across New Zealand, it is a testament to the value of the service and the commitment and positive collaboration across the consortium of AnyQuestions partners that, 20 years after the service was first established, it remains as relevant as ever.

The enduring and trusted partnership between the Ministry and the library sector has been a real strength enabling us to develop and sustain this unique service and the connections across education and libraries.

You can visit AnyQuestions online at: <https://anyquestions.govt.nz>

Photo caption

Celebrating the 15th anniversary of AnyQuestions. Photo by Mark Beatty.





Photo caption

Pūtoi Rito Dargaville Project, Community event at the Dargaville Field Day. From left Molly Molving-Lilo, Katarina Allely, Daisy Foster, Anne Dickson. Photo by xx

Pūtoi Rito Communities of Readers

Pūtoi Rito Communities of Readers was a community partnership initiative led by the National Library and supported by Te Puna Foundation, which provided children and young people in communities across New Zealand with opportunities and support to develop a love of reading.

The initiative was developed in response to declining literacy rates in New Zealand, growing research into the benefits of reading for pleasure, and the disparity of access to support for reading.

A number of strategies and approaches worked across all six Pūtoi Rito projects, which generally align with previous findings.

For example, the importance of providing access to books that reflect New Zealand's cultural context and diversity, reading role models, reading together and leadership.

Pūtoi Rito demonstrated that, given the right conditions and opportunities, all young people can enjoy reading and gain the benefits of reading for pleasure – across different settings, diversity and cultural factors, ages and abilities.

The projects highlighted the importance of providing access to books that reflect New Zealand's cultural context and diversity, and building on existing strengths, resources and connections in communities.

Building a culture of reading works best when it is a collaborative effort between schools, libraries, families and communities and makes the most of resources and connections available.

The National Library acknowledges Te Puna Foundation which provided funding for Pūtoi Rito between 2019–2024, National Library staff who worked on the initiative, and all partners,

participants, researchers and supporters who helped make Pūtoi Rito a success.

While the community projects have been completed, Pūtoi Rito School Communities of Readers continues as part of the ongoing work of the National Library. It has ongoing impact with increased research activity on, and awareness of, reading for pleasure for literacy and well-being outcomes.



Photo caption

From left, current Te Awhi Rito Kate de Goldi, National Librarian Rachel Esson, and former Te Awhi Rito Alan Dingley. Photo by Mark Beatty.

Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador

In 2025, Kate De Goldi was named the third Te Awhi Rito New Zealand Reading Ambassador for children and young people, New Zealand for two years. Te Awhi Rito supports and champions the importance of reading in the lives of young New Zealanders, their whānau and communities. Kate is a highly regarded and award-winning author, as well as a respected and engaging broadcaster, teacher and public speaker.

Kate will build on the work of the previous Reading Ambassadors author Ben Brown and School Librarian Alan Dingley advocating for, modelling, and inspiring reading for pleasure.

My advocacy will often be in-person and, I hope, in as many forums and through as much media as possible – communicating reading’s fundamental role in young people’s lives and its contribution to education and wellbeing across a lifetime. – Kate De Goldi

The National Library of New Zealand established the Te Awhi Rito initiative with support from Te Puna Foundation. The Library leads the programme in collaboration with Read New Zealand Te Pou Muramura, Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa, and Storylines Children’s Literature Charitable Trust Te Whare Waituhi Tamariki o Aotearoa.

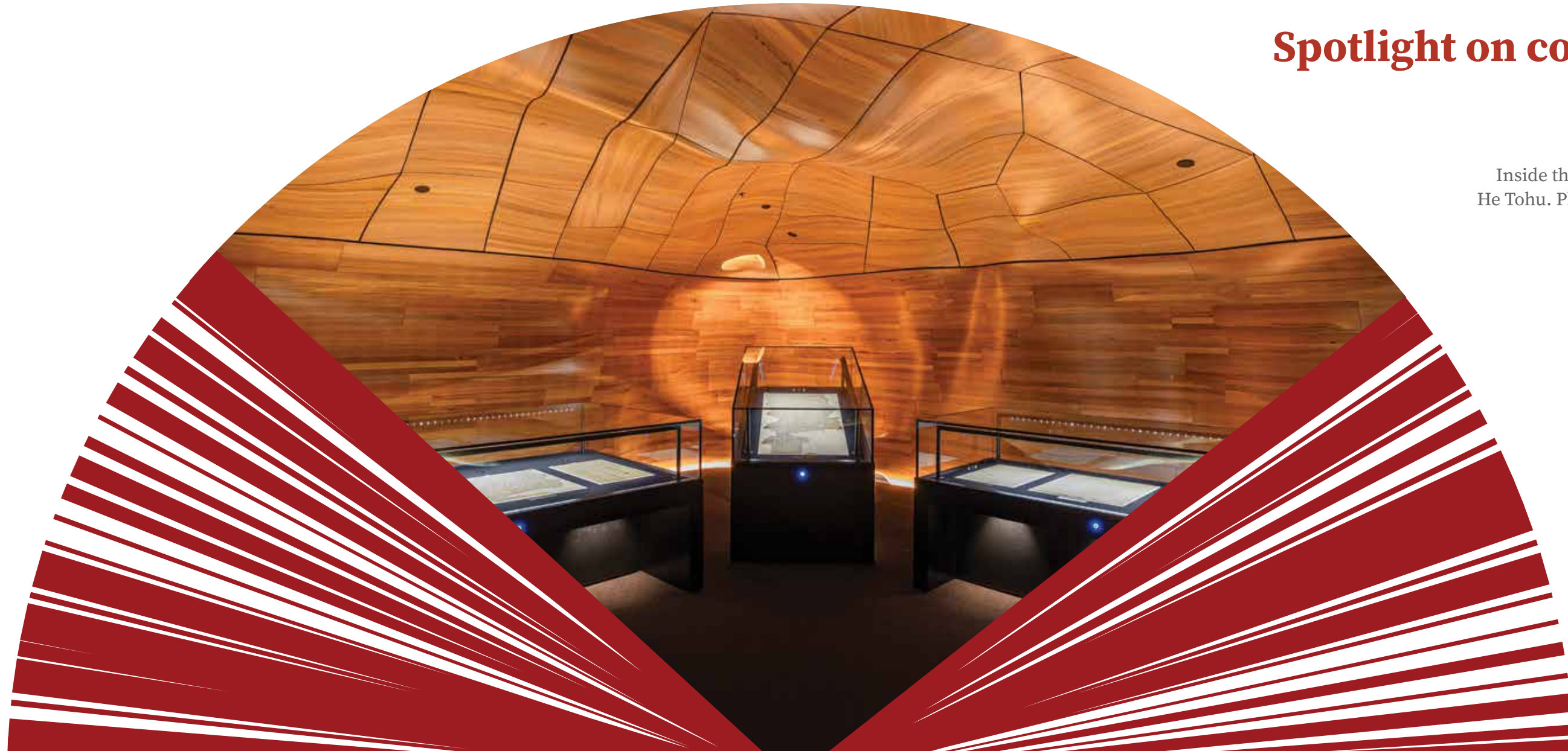
Keep up with Te Awhi Rito news and activities via: <https://readingambassador.nz>



Spotlight on collections

Photo caption

Inside the document room of He Tohu. Photo by Mark Beatty.



He Tohu

He Tohu is a permanent exhibition at the National Library of three iconic constitutional documents that have helped shape our country. The documents in the exhibition are:

- 1835 He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni – Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand
- 1840 Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Treaty of Waitangi
- 1893 Women’s Suffrage Petition – Te Petihana Whakamana Pōti Wāhine

The name He Tohu means ‘the signs’ and refers to the unique signatures or marks of those who supported these documents. For Māori, these marks are sacred as those who signed have added their mana.

The joint exhibition, with Archives New Zealand, opened in 2017 and is housed in a space designed to preserve the documents for generations to come. Outside the document room, a treasure trove of

information is available on interactive displays. A facilitated experience is also available at the Library’s Auckland site.

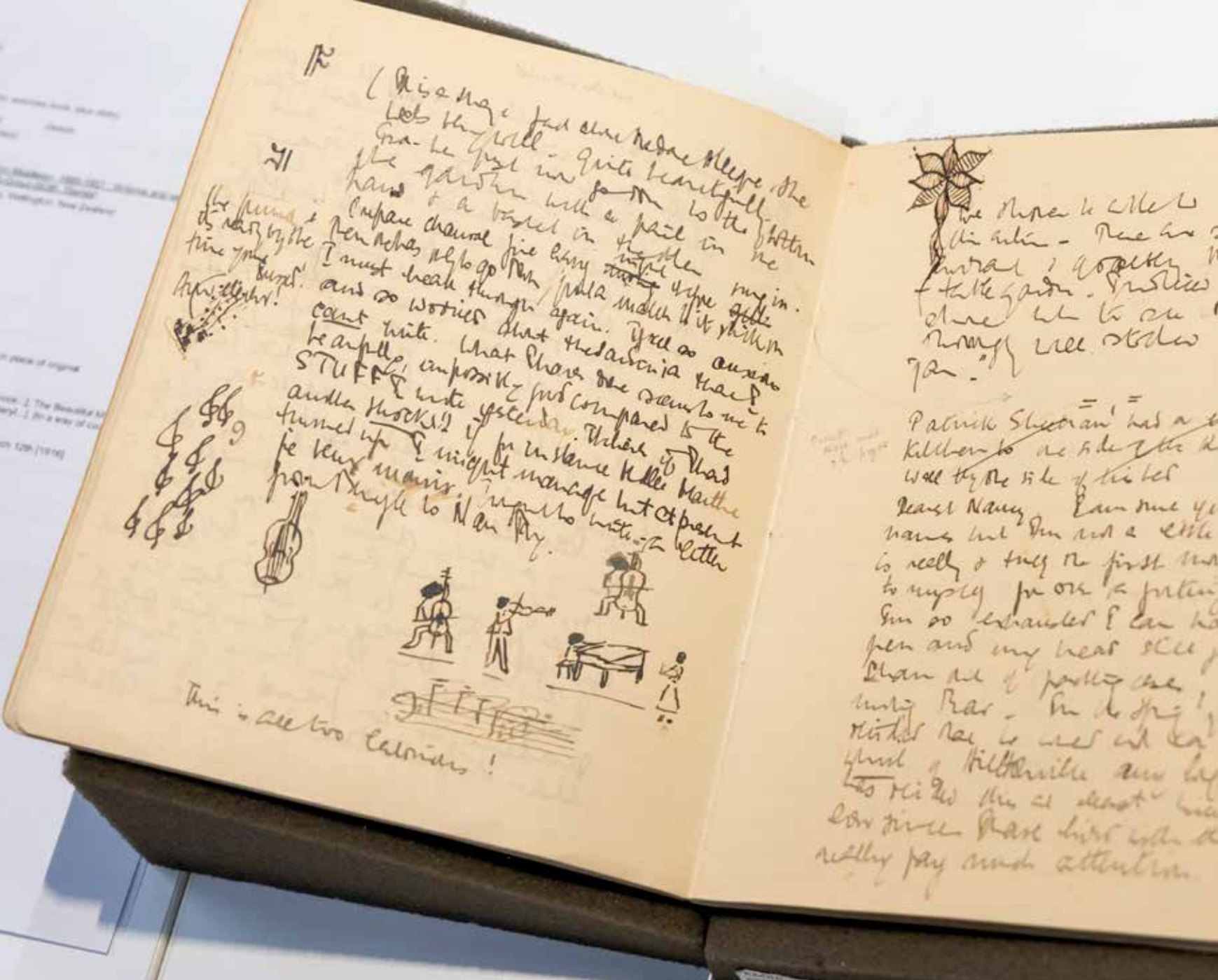
Through the exhibition we aim to preserve our fragile and irreplaceable documentary heritage for future generations, improve access to these taonga for all New Zealanders and visitors to our country, and enhance learning opportunities for young New Zealanders.

Over the last year, we have welcomed 30,931 visitors to *He Tohu*, while our *He Tohu* Auckland site delivered programmes to over 9,000 students, educators and professionals.



Photo caption

Students from St Mary’s College at the He Tohu exhibition in Wellington. Photo by Mark Beatty.



Landmarks in history

In 2025, the global significance of the Library's Katherine Mansfield literary and personal papers was recognised with a listing on UNESCO's International Memory of the World Register. This elevates the status of the documentary heritage collection, placing it alongside other internationally recognised landmarks in history. Only three other collections from New Zealand have been recognised in the prestigious international register.

Mansfield is New Zealand's most celebrated writer internationally, best known for

transforming the short story genre. The papers held at the Alexander Turnbull Library represent the largest and most significant collection of Mansfield material in the world. The Mansfield Collections include original correspondence, notebooks and journals, and personal belongings, including her typewriter. They document the writer's artistic preoccupations, development, and methods, as well as her complex personal life.

Photo caption

One of 46 of Katherine Mansfield's notebooks held by the National Library. This one from her early days as a student of music, as indicated by the doodles. Mansfield was a talented cellist and initially wanted to be a professional musician before she changed her focus to writing. Photo by Mark Beatty.

Broadening horizons

A recent purchase for the Rare Books and Fine Printing Collection is Helena Bochořáková-Dittrichová's, *Z mého dětství* (*From My Childhood*), published in Prague in 1929. Considered to be the first graphic novel published by a woman, *From My Childhood* is a moving memoir of the joys and sorrows of the author's early years, told wordlessly through a series of 95 woodcuts, mostly depicting quiet domestic scenes.

The Czech artist and writer Helena Bochořáková-Dittrichová (1894–1980) brought her own distinct style to the woodcut novel, a genre developed by Frans Masereel and Lynd Ward in the early 20th century. Inspired by her own experiences as much as by world history and religion, Bochořáková-Dittrichová's focus on the domestic helped legitimise the private realm as a valid artistic subject.

Today, graphic novels are widely recognised – by researchers and educators alike – as valuable resources for developing literacy, nurturing a love of reading, and telling stories visually. Our cartoon and comic collecting scope has recently been broadened to reflect that, and to ensure we capture a wide range of New Zealand stories in visual formats. From rare books to literary classics or curriculum-aligned titles, these books offer something for every reader.

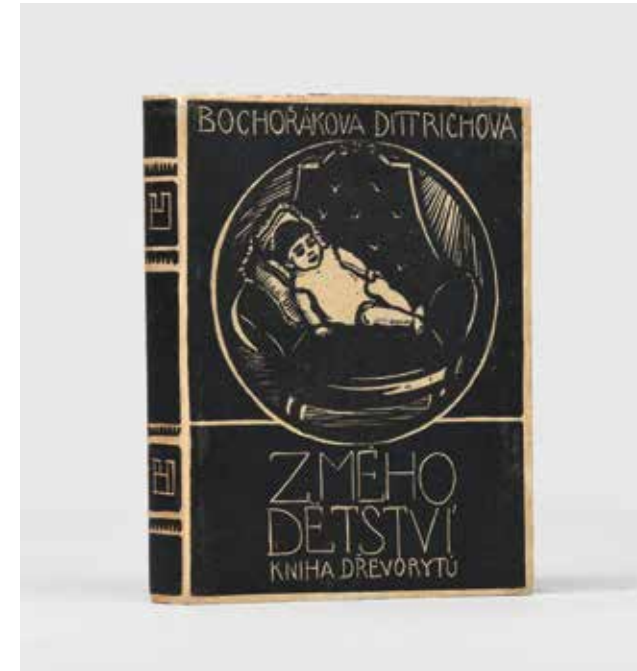


Photo caption

Cover design and illustration from *Z mého dětství*. Photo by Ruth Segarra at Peter Harrington Rare Books.





Photo caption

Touring exhibition, *A Different Light: First Photographs of Aotearoa*, at the Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi in Wellington.

Amplifying exhibitions

The National Library curates a regular programme of exhibitions, which we primarily present in our galleries on the ground floor of our Wellington building. In the past year, we have welcomed 29,901 exhibition visitors to these galleries. We also work with other organisations to expand our combined reach.

In 2024/25 our touring exhibition, *A Different Light: First Photographs of Aotearoa*, brought together the extraordinary photographic collections of three major research libraries – Auckland War Memorial Museum, Alexander Turnbull Library and Hocken Collections – showcasing the captivating history of early photography, in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin.

The Library is also partnering with City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi to deliver a series of exhibitions in Wellington

between 2024 and 2026 while the gallery is temporarily away from home.

We’ve been pleased to play an active role in supporting them and working with our City Gallery colleagues to amplify each other’s strengths. We hope gallery regulars who weren’t as familiar with the Library have been able to explore this part of town and what we have on offer.

Wheako Pōneke Experience Wellington Tumu Whakarae Diana Marsh says that multi-partner opportunities have taken City Gallery into new spaces and put it in front of new audiences, so it can continue to play an important role as a place of discussion in the heart of the city and beyond.



Shop

Te Āmiki supports the National Library through the development and sale of beautiful items based on the Library's collections, exhibitions and other things we think you'll love. We support local artists, authors, designers, makers and crafts people. You can shop with us in-person at our Wellington site on the corner of Molesworth and Aitken streets.

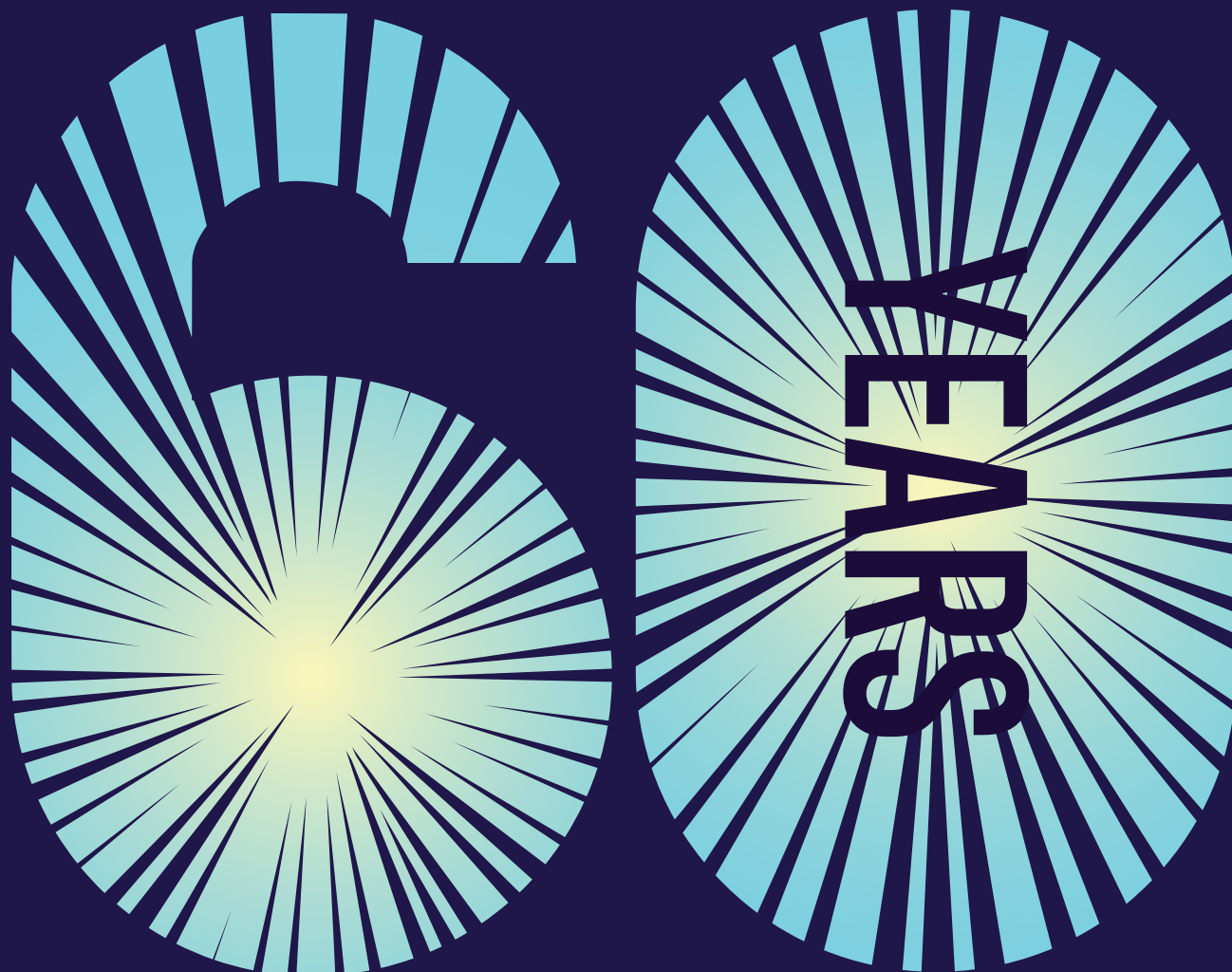
Our shop hours are:

Monday to Friday: 9am–5pm

Saturday: 9am–1pm

You can shop with us anytime and from anywhere, online at:

<https://shop.natlib.govt.nz>



Thanks to

We are grateful for the support of our fundraising bodies and Friend groups.

Many thanks to Te Puna Foundation, especially David, and the late Helen, Zwartz for making the inaugural bequest and ongoing support. Te Puna Foundation is the fundraising body for the National Library. Its goal is unlocking the 'Value of Knowledge' for all New Zealanders. Find out how you can donate, leave a bequest or become a corporate partner on our website: <https://natlib.govt.nz/support-us/te-puna-foundation/donate-te-puna-foundation>

For more than 85 years, the Turnbull Endowment Trust has operated as an independent charity supporting the Alexander Turnbull Library. Its mission is to make New Zealand's documentary heritage accessible to everyone, unlocking the full potential of these valuable collections. Find out more about the Turnbull Endowment

Trust and how you can donate on its website: <https://turnbulltrust.org.nz>

The Friends of the Turnbull Library is a national organisation supporting the work and activities of the Alexander Turnbull Library since 1939. They work to promote public interest in the library's collections and support research and use of these collections. Find out more about the Friends of the Turnbull Library and how you can get involved on their website: <https://turnbullfriends.org.nz/>

The Friends of the Dorothy Neal White Collection aim to foster interest in the National Library's three children's literature collections and in the development of children's literature. The Friends hold meetings and lectures several times a year. Membership is by annual subscription. Find out more on the Friends' website: <https://dnwfriends.nzl.org>

Connect with us

The National Library of New Zealand
Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa has three
offices around the motu in Auckland,
Wellington, and Christchurch.

You can also explore our website
and collections online at:
<https://natlib.govt.nz>

Visit us:

National Library of New Zealand Te Puna
Mātauranga o Aotearoa

Corner of Molesworth and Aitken Streets
Thorndon, Wellington

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National Library Auckland Centre
(Services to Schools)

8 Stanley Street
Parnell, Auckland

--

National Library Christchurch Centre
(By appointment only)

Cavendish Business Park (Unit 7)
50 Cavendish Business Park
Casebrook, Christchurch

Get social online:

We are active on Facebook, follow us for news
and event listings at: [https://www.facebook.com/
NationalLibraryNZ](https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryNZ)

Hire our venue spaces:

We’ve got spaces for hire that are perfect for
conferences, events, meetings, workshops, talks,
seminars or training sessions. Our spaces are
flexible, and we have rooms for hire suiting events
ranging from a handful of people to up to 300. To
find out more about our venues and the services
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