

10 April 2012

Kia ora koutou

I am writing to let you know about the new Heritage Forum, which is being convened by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, and which has the support of the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, the Hon Chris Finlayson.

Simply put, the purpose of the new Forum is to encourage stronger links and more coherence across the government heritage sector and to be a visible presence promoting government heritage interests at a national level.

Currently, the government heritage sector in New Zealand is composed of a number of agencies with differing mandates and institutional arrangements, and there is no overarching national framework. The existing national level and other significant organisations in the heritage sector each do a very good job in their respective areas, but the sector will benefit from increasing its national profile, by developing long-term strategies, and by finding ways to address cross-sector issues.

Membership of the group is currently composed of central government departments and agencies. These are: Te Papa Tongarewa, Archives New Zealand, the National Library, the Department of Conservation, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

I recognise that many of the most significant heritage interests and institutions lie outside central government. However, it is important to have a mechanism by which central government can direct and agree its heritage priorities as a basis for engagement with the wider sector. To achieve its objectives the Forum will need to engage and work with organisations and groups throughout the broader sector and reflect the diversity of the sector.

The Forum will meet every three months, or more frequently as the occasion demands. To give you a flavour of the diversity of the agenda, at its second meeting, held on 22 March, the Forum discussed, among other matters: increasing public access to the Treaty of Waitangi and other founding documents; World War One commemorations; the sharing and repurposing of content among heritage agencies; and heritage links between agencies, based on an analysis of briefings to incoming ministers.

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I believe that the Forum has the potential to make a real difference to the way that we address heritage issues in New Zealand. Further communications will follow in due course. In the meantime, should you have any questions, Ronald Milne, Deputy Chief Executive/Heritage Services Branch Manager at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage will be pleased to hear from you. He may be contacted by email through ronald.milne@mch.govt.nz or on 04 496 6334.

Ngā mihi



Lewis Holden
Chief Executive