

Report of the Guardians Kaitiaki of the Alexander Turnbull Library for the year ended 30 June 2022

Purpose of the Guardians Kaitiaki

The purpose of the Guardians is to provide assurance to the people of New Zealand that –

- (a) The collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library are held in perpetuity
- (b) Those collections are –
 - (i) Provided with separate and suitable accommodation
 - (ii) Preserved, protected, developed and made accessible for all the people of New Zealand in a manner consistent with their status as documentary heritage and taonga
- (c) The character of the services distinguishing the Alexander Turnbull Library as a research library is maintained. (S17)¹

Discharging our role

The Guardians Kaitiaki met on 8 September 2021, 17 November 2021, 23 February 2022 and 29 June 2022. At each meeting briefings were presented by the National Librarian and Chief Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library. We also received briefings on pertinent matters such as significant acquisitions to the collection; staff movements; collection plans; the collection audit; completion of the centenary celebrations; the impact of Covid 19 and the protests in Parliament grounds; work on privacy; digitisation of the audio-visual collections; and the ongoing building and associated developments.

As Chair I met periodically with the Chairs of the Library and Information Advisory Commission, the Archives Council Te Rua Wānanga, Komiti Māori and the Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision Board. These meetings are useful in maintaining a collaborative approach to the guardianship of the collections.

Assurance provided under S17

The assurance provided in the remainder of this report is based on the information gathered from the activities described above and our judgement thereon. We also referred to the annual reports of the National Librarian and the Chief Librarian. That assurance is limited by the nature of those activities. Each subsection of s17 of the National Library of New Zealand (Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa) Act 2003 is considered below.

¹ National Library of New Zealand (Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa) Act 2003 s17

The collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library are held in perpetuity

Guardians Kaitiaki assessment: **Achieved**

The information provided to us and our observations lead us to believe the collections are developed and maintained as a permanent collection for research purposes. No evidence came to our attention of the inappropriate disposal of collection items. Occasionally donors do request the return of items on loan and the processes applied appear to be appropriate in these circumstances.

Those collections are provided with separate and suitable accommodation

Guardians Kaitiaki assessment: **Achieved**

The planned new Archives New Zealand building is under construction and the Guardians Kaitiaki are continuing to maintain an interest in the Tāhuhu project, particularly the impact on the reading room, storage and preservation activities and accessibility. Since last year one of the building projects namely the new repository to be built in Levin has been put on hold. We understand there is adequate storage for the medium term, but given the lengthy nature of construction projects, encourage the commencement of the new repository before the current storage space is full. In the meantime, the collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library continue to be held securely principally in the Wellington based National Library building.

Those collections are preserved, protected, developed and made accessible for all the people of New Zealand in a manner consistent with their status as documentary heritage and taonga

Preservation, protection and development

Guardians Kaitiaki assessment: **Work in progress**

The Guardians Kaitiaki were briefed on new acquisitions, preservation activities and resourcing. As well as the ongoing legal deposits, the library has acquired several major collections and items this year. A specialist multi-disciplinary team is planned to arrange three major new collections namely: CK Stead, John Scott and Shona Rapira Davies. This work will commence in the next financial year.

Utaina, the digitisation project to preserve Crown owned audio-visual collections held by the Alexander Turnbull Library, Archives New Zealand and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision has completed the set-up phase and the processing of material will start in the next financial year.

Accessibility

Guardians Kaitiaki assessment: **Work in progress**

Unfortunately, there was disruption to access the reading room due to Covid-19. To try and manage these circumstances management decided to close the reading room on Mondays to give certainty of access for the other days of the week. This solution was pragmatic but did impact researchers' access. The Parliamentary protests further disrupted access for a three-week period. The impact of these events is clearly shown on the graph in the Chief Librarian's report. Fortunately, the distance enquiries were available when physical access to the reading room was not possible.

A review of Chief Librarian restrictions was completed in March 2022 and resulted in a set of guidelines to balance the original intentions of donors and removing barriers to access. The Guardians Kaitiaki believe this is a helpful step in improving accessibility.

The book "Te Kupenga: 101 stories of Aotearoa from the Turnbull" was launched and is an innovative and interesting way for New Zealanders to get a taste of the breadth of the collection. We understand the book has almost sold out.

As we reported last year the Tāhuhu project includes developing and implementing a new operating model for the National Library (including the Alexander Turnbull Library), Archives New Zealand and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision to work collaboratively and use physical and digital resources optimally. This is still work in progress.

The character of the services distinguishing the Alexander Turnbull Library as a research library is maintained.

Guardians Kaitiaki assessment: **Mainly Achieved**

We have observed that the importance of the Alexander Turnbull Library as a research library is engrained in the staff and systems of the library. However, once again Covid-19 has affected researchers access to the library. The staff have done their best to provide online access despite the circumstances.

Acknowledgements

I thank my fellow Guardians Kaitiaki Victoria Passau, Paul Meredith, Sarah Benikowsky and Damon Salesa for their work over the last twelve months.

Our thanks to Chris Szekely, Chief Librarian Alexander Turnbull Library and Rachel Esson, Te Pouhuaki National Librarian and their staff who were consistently open and engaged with us. We also thank Hoani Lambert and other staff in the Department of Internal Affairs for their assistance during 2021/22.

To the staff of the Alexander Turnbull Library, we express our appreciation for the skills you bring to your roles and our particular thanks for your commitment during the pandemic. Our sincere thanks to Nina Leach and Ruby Yee who so ably supported the Guardians/Kaitiaki over a long period and have now left the department.

Conclusion

Once again, the year has not been easy with the disruptions as a result of the pandemic and the protests at Parliament grounds. While access to the collections has been affected by these events, staff have done their best to service the needs of researchers and the general public. The importance of this collection and its ongoing growth and preservation are critical to maintaining our collective knowledge of the history and key events that have affected this nation. We encourage the students of New Zealand to use the Alexander Turnbull Library, it is an excellent source of material for their New Zealand history studies and research projects.

Lyn Provost
Chair on behalf of the
Guardians (Kaitiaki) of the Alexander Turnbull Library
14 November 2022