

I am writing as the advocacy representative for ARANZ (Archive and Records Association of New Zealand) in response to a number of members expressing concern about the National Register of Archives and Manuscripts, now called the Community Archive.

Concern has also been mentioned by other heritage sectors, such as libraries and users. Points raised were largely surrounding continued access and development of this service. They include:

- The inability to add records to existing holdings, in effect relegating Community Archives to a static resource
- Archives New Zealand commitment to ongoing development and support of this service
- The lack of a method for exporting records out of the Community Archives platform to migrate data or find an alternative platform.

The Community Archive is the only archival repository for community and smaller organisations with central government support. The freezing of this resource and service with no indication of future development greatly impacts the availability of heritage resources and a diverse voice within the country's historical record.

The Community Archives as a resource is often the portal through which researchers make contact and find research material. For small community archives, museums, and libraries with original holdings it is an invaluable resource and support. Limited funding, resources and technical knowledge in institutions mean that many rely on the central government support of this resource.

Mention was also made that this valuable research tool is not well publicised, possibly an indication of Archives NZ lack of commitment to the site. We suggest that given the potential of such a tool, that Archives enlist the support of larger institutions or individuals,

many of whom may be our members, to assist with the development of the Community Archive. When it was first established as NRAM, workshops were held to promote the site; possibly workshops could be held at Archives regional offices to advise users and contributors what is happening and how they may be able to help.

The lack of communication is a frustration that many of our members feel and disinclines them to continue to support the Community archive, although the principle of it is very well supported.

The Community Archive is an asset, but needs regular maintenance (sometimes the platform the site is on does not work) and development. While highlighting the issues our members and the wider community have concerning the site, we are willing to assist in any way we can.

If we can be of any help, or you have any questions and comments, please let me know and I can pass on any information to my Council and the ARANZ membership.

Thank you

Kathleen Stringer

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