



# Saving History

*Digitising access to our heritage*

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*A project supported by the New Zealand History Federation, Te Kotahitanga o nga Hitori o Aotearoa*

*Edited by Neil Curgenvin*

## Saving History goes to Parliament

Following on from comments made over the phone when receiving a turn down on a funding application to Tourism Growth Partnership, read on.....

**Saving History went to Parliament** in the form of a two page introductory letter with a four page report on where we had come from, but more importantly, where we were going and how we wanted to get there. Setting out the eight various areas of action, Discover NZ, Stqry, Mytours, Heritage Trails, Replicas, Funding figures, Activities, Local History (see below).

These went out in an A4 envelope @ \$3.50 postage; therefore we included a copy of *NZ Legacy*

### Backing the Truck up....

You are aware of how **Saving History** came about? The 2014 AGM "ITEM" from President Neil Algar which eventuated with QR Coding – taking what you have on your hard drive and putting it on a platform for the world to access. Well after costing issues with the STQRY outfit (they got too big when they received \$5.5m funding and headed to America and wanted to raise our fee from a \$250 charge to \$6,000) Saving History needed to keep the concept (QR coding) but move on, so we realigned to *"raising the profile of rural communities with small museums through historical tourism."*

With QR we found out about a funding opportunity in Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise. *"Ah, here's someone on our wave length..."* – yeh right. We proceeded through THE PROCESS, email enquiry....., positive response....., visit to Wellington....., meeting with the appropriate person, two hours later a hand shake approval to go forward, prepare a draft business plan....., discussion on further detail....., submit a comprehensive application, email acknowledgement of receipt and good work done, follow up....., Decision Day, hit the brick wall: *"the Panel declined your application on the grounds the QR coding is becoming a standardised business model across a multitude of tourism attractions. As a result the expense was considered to be of a type and value that should naturally happen in an applicant's business. The Panel also considered the wider benefit of unlocking the information resources with smaller regional museums and considered that this may be a better fit for alternative funding sources such as the Ministry of Culture and Heritage."*

No prize for guessing the response from MCH: *"Thank you for your email to the Ministry of Culture and Heritage seeking financial assistance with your QR coding for history places project. The Ministry has no source of relevant funding to assist with this project."* REALLY!

Back to Tourism Growth Partnership at MBIE. On the phone, when telling me the result of the Panel meeting, the 'faceless bureaucrat' told me *"museums in small towns are insignificant, usually run as incorporated societies, with well meaning, aged, untrained volunteers in buildings that are usually past their use-by date in great need of repair, living on a hand to mouth existence with no substantial budget, lacking in financial and general planning."* How to get my dander up in one easy lesson.



Having been involved in the sector for over 25 years, and lived in small towns (Ohakune, Woodville and Taumarunui), many museums are the hub for social interaction for a great number of people, establishing Incorporated Societies for the protection of individuals and members. Being aged myself, I had several partnership projects with National Services to bring training to worthwhile enthusiastic adults, used my draughting qualifications and trade training, up and down ladders, splashing paint here, there and everywhere to help keep historical buildings in working order, running sausage sizzles, hosting heritage film evenings and the whole gambit of fund raisers to get hard earned money and prepared this application and many more to plan and fund the future for history in New Zealand. I was hurt for myself and the rest of you.

Now I am continuing to do something about it, with your help.

## Getting on the Highway to Parliament

Picking up on the content of this comment the following were identified:

Ministry for Tourism, John Key

Associate Minister for Tourism, Paula Bennett

Tourism New Zealand

Minister for Culture and Heritage, Maggie Barry

Associate Minister of C & H,

Heritage New Zealand, Museums Aotearoa, National Services Te Papa

Minister for Business, Innovation and Enterprise, Stephen Joyce

Associate Minister of BIE, Te Ururoa Flavell,

Department for BIE, Internal Affairs

Minister for the Aged, Maggie Barry

Minister from Small Business, Craig Foss

Minister for Archives, Peter Dunne

Archives New Zealand

Minister for Community and Volunteer Sector, Joy Goodhew

## An array of responses, not from everyone either (yet?)

30 May: Office of Hon. Maggie Barry ONZM, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage. Minister for Conservation. Minister for Seniors.

*"Thank you...Your correspondence, along with Legacy, is with the Minister for her consideration."*

1 June: (email) Ilagi Talitonu, @ parliament.govt.nz: *"On behalf of Hon Peter Dunne, thank you for your letter...I have provided your letter to him and he will respond in due time."* I respond next day pointing out Peter had spoken to me about archives and his thoughts on having access to information on what collections small museums around the country had in them at our Conference in KATE Onslow in April 2015 and he was looking forward to working with me on something like this. Later that day, further email: *"I will pass this on to the Minister."*

2 June: (email) Deborah Gray @tnz.govt.nz: *"Your recent information to our CE Kevin Bowler that was addressed to the Minister and Associate Minister for Tourism. They have asked that I look over it and reply on their behalf. It looks like you have a very comprehensive and detailed programme of work underway and a number of support partners, which is a fantastic way to start a project."*

**However,**

I have recently been involved in meetings (no minutes or notes available when I requested) with the Ministry (I assume tourism) that appear to be targeting similar objectives to what you are targeting. Museums Aotearoa and

Local Government NZ recently convened a meeting of key parties in the cultural sector (can't have been all as we weren't there) to discuss ways in which they can raise the profile of museums, galleries and culture centres of various kinds [In August 2015 MA and Te Papa held a series of workshops to share experience, views and ambitions for our sector].

In addition the Min C&H have also had recent conversations with us around how to market both physical and environmental places of significance in New Zealand, so they have a programme of work underway that matches your objectives [anyone heard from this lot?]

3 June: a response from Deborah- to the best of my knowledge {I think she pinched this line from Neil Algar when he write forewords for books} *"the Ministry is looking to shape a pilot programme around better marketing of NZ's historical sites but, as ever, there is a funding issue."*

Finally at a regional level, it is the Regional Tourism Organisation who have responsibility to promote tourism product in their region for economic regional benefit – they focus on growing both domestic and international tourism.

There are around 30 RTO's across New Zealand (only 13 regions though).

8 June: Office of the Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism:

*"on behalf of the Prime Minister, Rt Hon John Key, thank you for your letter... for Mr. Key's information."* Correspondence Manager.

9 June: Office of Hon Peter Dunne, Minister for Internal Affairs.

*Neil Curvengen – (yes, couldn't even spell my name correctly). "Your letter presents a range of ideas on raising the profile of rural communities with small museums through historical tourism. Primarily your ideas relate to culture and heritage sector rather than the responsibilities of Archives New Zealand, for which I am the Minister responsible. I have forwarded it to Min C&H."*

28 June: Office of Craig Foss, Minister for Small Business

*"Thank you..... your letter provides an interesting summary of how the use of technology will enable visitors to this country's regions to experience more involving activities when visiting local museums. The Government is supportive of any activities that encourage and support tourism activities in our country"* [just don't ask us for anything].

I am awaiting further responses but not holding my breath

## Back on the open highway

The development of QR coding has opened several doors, (ALL related-yeh right), but things we see as benefiting you and your community, correct us if we are wrong.

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|------------------------|---|
| <b>Discover NZ</b>     | A geotech locator app which will tell you where you are (at the museum) and what you can find in your immediate area. <b>This is being presented at the Auckland Regional gathering 27<sup>th</sup> August in Helensville</b>   |
| <b>Stqry</b>           | The QR Coding app that will open the door of the museum when the museum is closed. This will provide information on what the museum has to offer, what is in their inventory, what archives they have and what information they can make available on the local area and its people. This could be developed to include Retail, Agriculture, Commercial, Community, Recreational and Residential history.   |
| <b>Mytours</b>         | A touring app that will bring you on location with historical walks in the immediate area, the retail, heritage buildings and sites. Not just showing where these are located but also giving the detail of the story behind each accessed through a QR Code. (We are developing one with Petone)   |
| <b>Heritage Trails</b> | Supporting Councils who maintain these trails with marketing that will be giving the location, map of the trail and the stories behind each site. Currently a brochure may only give a paragraph description, this will have a QR code for each site to give as much detail that is available for that site. We are preparing a colouring book of sites and places for an activity after the trail tour as a reminder of this experience. (Working on an application for funding by national co.) |

**Replicas** Many museums have valuable items, too valuable to be on open display and handled by the general public. We have found a 3D printing system that can replicate the item and have it available whilst the 'real thing' is safely locked away. **We have an example going through of a painting and another of a rifle, more when these are confirmed.**

### **Funding Figures**

Many of our members have trouble getting funding. One question frequently asked is "How many people come through your museum?" Generally this information has been gathered by an enthusiastic volunteer ticking people off as they walk past. Should that volunteer be otherwise occupied people can be missed and therefore figures are not as accurate as they could be. We are going to offer a counter which identifies everybody whichever way they are moving.

### **Activities**

We know from experience that people visiting museums generally do their research with a pre visit by Google, then the visit itself and usually some hands on experience.

For the post visit experience we are planning to present a book series about these small museums and everything they contain. This will include selected photographs and detailed text of the displays including their stories. We are preparing an activity book of displays and articles within the museum for both during the visit and as a reminder of that visit.

### **Local History**

Our communities are full of people with interesting stories about themselves, their families and their environment. We are planning to capture and have them available, not just locally, but for visitors to collect and retain a record of our country and its people.

We will work in collaboration with local libraries to fill in the gaps rather than duplicate what is currently in the market place.

### **Big picture image**

The future view, at the completion of this project, is having the 13 regions (in Regional Council Zones) of New Zealand we are working on linked within their group of museums combined with the overall collection of small museums (385+) so that the Free and Independent traveler can seamlessly move around our country, locating the museum on their phone, together with other local information close to the museum, confident professional presentations, whilst similar are locally different, the displays have an air of professionalism and complete information, the full contents are 'on-line' but accessible for their information with accurate complete stories, items on display maybe replicas (originals safely and correctly archived) but are accurate representations and there are before, during and after experiences.

We look forward to you joining us on this journey, PLEASE get in touch or keep in touch with what is happening in your area and how we can help, if we can.

Thank you to all those who have been of help so far, it can only get better.