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Museums in the New Millennium

Sir Neil Cossons, the Chair of English Heritage and recently retired Chief Executive of the National Museum of Science and Technology in London, was in New Zealand in August.

As museums have become increasingly influential so the intensity of the debate about them has grown. 'At first sight the debate is about the defence of scholarship in the face of populism. But the divide is much deeper than this and the issues more complex.'

Sir Neil Cossons accepted an invitation from National Services to discuss with museum and heritage sector members, shifts in the way museums interact with their audiences. He gave lectures in Auckland, Dunedin and Wellington and also visited Northland's Mission Station site, Kerikeri and Waitangi National Trust, and Gore's Hokonui Moonshine Museum.

'The jumbo jet and the mobile phone have transformed the world.' Sir Neil Cossons was speaking in August at Te Papa about social change and shifts in the way museums interact with their audiences.

Cheap air travel, ease of communication, and increased leisure time have all contributed to what he called 'a process of democratisation allowing the many to enjoy the benefits hitherto restricted to the few'.

There is a new 'museum mania' which Cossons linked to two worldwide infatuations – for museums of contemporary art and for museums of inter-active science.

The art museum has become an icon in our cities, an icon that goes far beyond its role as a place to present art. The new art museums are judged as much by their architecture as their art. They are signature buildings by signature architects.

'And if the building is the exhibit, the name is the brand. So, Guggenheim takes its place with Gucci or Armani, or for that matter with Coca-Cola, as an international label. For \$320 million the Basque government has bought into the Guggenheim brand, gambling the future of the city on culture and tourism. It seems to be paying off.'

The values of the science centre on the other hand are entirely different. To their detractors they are seen as little more than fun palaces - children with short attention spans darting noisily from exhibit to exhibit. Others see science centres as offering participation and access with a focus on the needs of their audience.

But in taking a populist approach, the science centre has acquired a downmarket image, highlighted in many cases by tired and worn out fittings, exhibits that should work but don't and a generally down-at-heel appearance of buildings and contents - all of which contrast with the expensive finishes of other museums. In our visual world where style, distinctiveness and quality are seen to matter, Cossons believes

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Sir Neil Cossons speaks at Te Papa. Photo: Te Papa



Successful trial of museums' standards scheme

Congratulations to the 14 museums and the 16 peer reviewers who took part in a successful trial of the Museums Standards Scheme. The feedback suggests the standards scheme is an important development for the museum sector:

Benefits identified by the museums and their peer reviewers

- Clearer sense of strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done
- Staff, volunteer and committee training and ownership of museum direction
- Knowledge of the museum history and operation shared more amongst museum staff and volunteers
- Improved procedure manuals
- Improved networking and relationships with other museums
- More planned approach to museum management
- Improved policies
- Improved relationships within the museum
- Improved relationships with individuals, groups and organisations outside the museum

The draft standards scheme provides museums with a framework to take stock of where they are at. In the 1999/00 trial, the museums reviewed themselves against some commonly accepted standards. They also got feedback from a pair of peer reviewers who reviewed their policies and practices and discussed with staff the issues they were facing.

It was a little daunting at first for many of the participants. Diana Ferris Director of Kāwhia Regional Museum Gallery commented:

'We weren't at all sure how it was going to work, but we firmly believed that museums standards are very important as a way of improving the well-being of many of the small museums throughout the country.'

In Gore, they had just relocated the historical museum and created the new Hokonui Moonshine Museum, so the trial meant they could review the developments. They were able to involve the management, committees and volunteers connected with their museums and the standards process has given them a wider picture of what the museums are doing. Arts and Heritage Officer Sue Wilson commented:

'When you are working away in a smaller town, you can't compare yourselves easily with others. We got a sense of satisfaction from going through the review process and seeing that we were doing all right.'

At the Waikato Museum of Art and History, the biggest museum involved, Jenny Cave who was then the Director, agreed that the trial was a chance to 'step outside' and take a critical look at their practices. She also valued the reference material backing up the standards.

Museums and peer reviewers alike noted the amount of work involved. Sue Wilson said they were able to put aside a block of time for a core group of paid staff and noted that it would be harder for volunteer-run museums.

Diana Ferris said Kāwhia had to defer some other projects while they completed the review process. But the results more than justified the work involved. The peer review report has become a tool for strategic planning, for sorting out training needs and for supporting the museum's case to funding bodies.

Gore found the review clarified for them what still needed to be done and they have created a forward work plan to attend to some issues in the short term and to build the rest into their annual planning cycle.

Quite apart from the formal aspect of the trial, the networking that occurred among participating museums was seen as an important part of the process:

'Local museum networks were extremely important for sharing of ideas and information. This helped us find solutions via other peoples' experiences, and gave us someone to compare against in general.' The high level of computer and email use, even among the smaller, volunteer-based museums makes it possible to develop these relationships further.

The peer reviewers admired the enthusiasm of the smaller museums, and their commitment to improve their services. Peer reviewer, Manawatu's Director Julie Catchpole said:

'I was astounded by what they achieved within a very tight resource – and I was impressed by

the level of community support behind the two museums which I peer reviewed.’

The peer reviewers noted how the standards scheme provides a self-help kit for improvement, and a national scheme of quality measurement for museums whatever their size. It gives outside feedback for museums about their services. Julie Catchpole also pointed out how the scheme supports museums in their relationship with local government:

‘Local government is looking more and more at bench-marking. They want to know that their museum is matching up to what a museum ought to be doing.’

Would you do it again?

Eleven of the 13 museums and eleven of the 13 peer reviewers said yes. One museum said that the peer review process was so valuable they would be willing to pay a reasonable cost for the peer review report. All said they would recommend the standards process to other museums.

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many science centres face marginalisation and, perhaps, disaster.

He also noted the poor job done by many conventional museums in interpreting their collections. ‘Why do museums do such a bad job of revealing those meanings to any but true believers? Is the museum a place for collections or a vehicle for ideas? Are the two compatible?’

‘Museums are questioning their own motives and, equally, they are being challenged and in some cases made accountable to the public and the agencies that fund them. This is perhaps one of the most invigorating of the changes in museum culture that we can look forward to in the new millennium.’

He predicted that museums in the new century will become the focus of more public debate, about their policies and their messages. Museums of science and contemporary history will find themselves drawn into controversy and challenge as exhibitions move out of the public comfort zone.

And, just as sponsors have placed on museums ever tougher demands for visibility and a return

Where to from here?

- The standards material has been edited into plainer English and a more user-friendly format.
- Consultation with Māori is under way to develop a set of standards driven by Māori cultural knowledge.
- Decisions will be made on how the standards scheme can operate as a national scheme from 2001/02.
- Northland museums have picked up the scheme as their National Services regional partnership project over 2000/01.
- The assessment sector reference group will continue to monitor and advise on these developments.

For more information or for a copy of the full evaluation report, contact us at Te Papa National Services.

Benefits identified by the museums and their peer reviewers

- Improved customer service
- Expansion of ideas, knowledge and awareness
- Improved morale – sense of pride in our museum and feeling valued
- More awareness of the need to focus on relationships with Māori
- A strong basis on which to build a long term development plan for the museum.

on their investment, so taxpayers will expect new standards of service and initiatives to widen access to communities currently denied the benefits that museums can offer. The critical questions are, can museums serve new audiences without aggravating the old ones, and will greater openness and accessibility threaten public perceptions of their authority and the public willingness to fund them.

‘The museum of the future will be a vibrant place. It will transcend traditional cultural boundaries, embrace rather than exclude. It will offer authority without being authoritarian, nurture scholarship and make its fruits widely available, look after its audiences as well as it looks after its collections. The museum is becoming the ultimate medium of expression – of art, of history, of science.’

The full text of Sir Neil Cosson’s Wellington speech can be downloaded from the National Services section of the Te Papa website: www.tepapa.govt.nz/national-services or obtained from National Services.

Bicultural Governance Wānanga

In June National Services hosted a two-day wānanga on the issues of bicultural governance and leadership in museums. A hundred people - museum directors, trust board members and iwi leaders – discussed the issues at Te Papa.

Whanganui Regional Museum has worked from the 'two houses' model developed by the Anglican church. The treaty partners are represented in two tikanga groups:

- Tikanga Māori house
- Civic house.

These two houses put people forward to a joint board and a majority of people from both houses must agree on any decision. There are only two votes – if one is against, then the matter goes back to the houses or is lost. All initiatives must be consistent with the Treaty and show consultation between partners.

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa has been shaped as a bicultural institution and its operating structure is informed by bicultural and Treaty principles.

This can be seen in

- the partnership between the Chief Executive and Kaihautū for the museum's strategic direction
- Te Roopu Whakamana Māori
- the organisational decision-making
- the formal iwi partnerships.

Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust includes a museum and art gallery, an exhibition centre, a science centre, an education discovery centre, a library and archives. It has asked its two councils – Napier and Hastings – for a review to provide a blueprint for change to bicultural governance as well as to its management and organisational structures.

Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre has shifted from its 26 member council and incorporated society status to establish a trust which has

- five iwi representatives
- four Friends of the Museum representatives
- two local authority representatives
- the museum director.

They are still working on board processes to ensure that Māori members can contribute effectively.

Other issues and themes discussed in plenaries and in small group sessions during the two days included:

- Legislation – the implications of the Antiquities Act and attempts to pass a new consolidated bill
- Local government attitudes and systems and their effects on bicultural development in museums
- Repatriation and the implications of new iwi-driven cultural centres
- Kaitiakitanga and the nature of the gift relationship
- Taonga, especially Te Reo.

Sir Paul Reeves drew together many of the workshop themes and pointed to the importance of the various systems of museum governance in providing working models that have applications in other sectors of our society. He noted too that by two-thirds the way through this century 'we will be a country of minorities – no one group would have more than 40%. This will be a time of great release for the current majority because they won't have to protect the status quo any more.'

The full wānanga report is being sent to all museums, iwi and wānanga participants. Further copies are available from National Services.

Four case studies illustrated the range of approaches that museums are taking as they seek to form partnerships with iwi and give substance to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Develop your own training plan

The recently developed National Training Framework for Museums is a long term plan for the development of all people who work in the sector. Already it is being actively used by museums as a tool to develop their own training programmes.

Jim Lynch of Skill Development Associates has worked with sector representatives to develop a tool to identify a museum's training priorities through workshops for both small and large museums. More workshops will be offered if there is a demand from groups of museums for this assistance. These workshops will guide participants to:

- check off their museum's skills against the framework
- set their museum's training objectives
- plan a training programme for their paid staff and volunteers.

The framework is a thorough, efficient and simple way of doing a training plan and one which ensures that museums are aligned to sector standards while customising their own one to three year programme. Sue Wilson from the Hokonui Heritage Centre commented: 'I think the material is enormously valuable in determining what museums actually do! Whether followed to the letter, or adjusted to suit each institution, the training programme provides the basis for museums to determine their own training needs, and then work towards meeting those needs.'

Steve Lowndes, Director of the Akaroa Museum, worked to ensure that the training needs tool applied to small as well as large museums – especially for museums run on a volunteer basis or with just one or two generalist staff. The new tool guides you to 'talk with the people who work with you and they can identify what they need to know.' The museum can then look for opportunities for suitable training and 'hopefully put something in the budget to pay for it.'

A large proportion of learning is done on the job and uses local resources and expertise including polytechnics and professionals in such fields as management, conservation, accounting, customer relations, collection care and photography. Some museums are able to tap into their local body training programmes and budgets, others form a regional network and share knowledge and bring in expert tutors.



Conservator Tony Clarke leads workshops on emergency training. Photo: Te Papa

A critical issue, however, is the small amount budgeted by many museums for training that was revealed in a recent survey. Jim Lynch believes that museums will have to lift their level of investment in skills development even while they use relatively cost-effective on the job training.

National Services soon will publish the new resource for small and large museums that provides a simple and understandable methodology to assess and prioritise training needs and develop training plans to meet those needs.

If you are interested in a workshop to be guided to use this resource to develop a training plan for your museum or your local network of museums contact National Services.

Fullbright scholar Professor Jonathan Thornton is visiting New Zealand late January/early February 2001. Te Papa is organising for him to lead two practical workshops of one week each:

1. A specialist museum-based workshop for conservators working with gilded objects.
2. A bicultural workshop on the making and adapting of hand-tools.

See flyer enclosed with this newsletter. Enquiries to National Services.

Regional Partnership Projects 2000/2001

National Services is partnering 17 regional museum projects to year end 30 June 2001. Te Papa is adding \$180,000 and operational support to the \$110,000 budgeted by the participating museums and iwi organisations to bring the following initiatives to fruition.

Bicultural development

The Science Centre, Manawatu Museum and Manawatu Art Gallery - Māori advisory committee.

A series of hui will be organised in the region in order to establish a komiti Māori as a reference group for the two tangata whenua representatives on the board. Contact: Julie Catchpole – catchpole@pncc.govt.nz

Nelson Provincial Museum - Relationships with tangata whenua.

The project will build on the recent creation of the Tasman Bays Heritage Trust as the museum's governing body, and continue consultation with tangata whenua. Contact: Hubert Klaassens – museumnp@iconz.co.nz

Tauranga Museum, Te Rūnanga o Ngāiterangi, Ngāti Ranginui Iwi Society, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Pukenga - Te Toki Poutangata / Forging a New Path.

Discussion and research with local iwi and hapū to identify what issues are important for these groups with regard to the museum and to define the nature of their future relationship. Contact: Rachel Davies – thvm@tauranga-dc.govt.nz

Motueka District Museum, Te Āwhina Marae - Iwi and museum liaison programme.

To identify and start planning and action on the the most valuable joint projects. Contact: Maclean Barker – travelling-light@xtra.co.nz

Ngāi Tahu Heritage Development – inventory of Ngāi Tahu taonga.

To document Ngāi Tahu taonga currently held by Auckland Museum, Te Papa, Canterbury, Otago and Southland museums. Contact: Te Āwhina Arahanga – TeAwhinaArahanga@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Standards

Northland Museums Association - Museum standards scheme in Northland.

Up to 13 Northland museums will complete a self and peer review of their standards of practice. Contact: Roger Mulvay – thekauri@xtra.co.nz

Training

Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust - Te Roopu Kaiawhi Taonga Te Pae Tawhiti.

The development of a coherent body of research on taonga Ngāti Kahungunu, using museum and iwi sources. Contact: Kaaren Mitcalfe – hbct@inhb.co.nz

Tauranga Museum - Emergency training.

Workshop on emergency recovery and the salvage of cultural property - for museum staff in the Tauranga region. Contact: Rachel Davies – thvm@tauranga-dc.govt.nz

Elms Foundation - Training volunteers in the care of the textile collection.

Rangi Te Kanawa will teach volunteers how best to support and store each artefact. Contact: Joy Drayton – joy.drayton@xtra.co.nz

West Coast Historical Museum - Collection care workshop.

A workshop for West Coast museums covering aspects of collection management and care. Contact: Peter Read – hokimuseum@xtra.co.nz

Millennium Art Gallery - Handling an exhibition.

A workshop for Blenheim museums and galleries in February 2001. Contact: Philippa Burns – bpburns@xtra.co.nz

Hurunui o Rangi Marae o Wairarapa - Training of iwi for the preventive conservation of taonga.
Four week-long wānanga to develop a core team to preserve and conserve taonga. Contact: Frances Reiri-Smith – francesr@library.mstn.govt.nz

Waikato Regional Museums - Co-operative and workshops.
To consolidate the network of small museums developed during the standards scheme trial and begin a programme of regional workshops. Contact: Mike Gribble – mgribb@ihug.co.nz

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre - Kaiārahi training programme.
To train kaiārahi / guides in support of the exhibition Kahungunu ka moe ka puta. Contact: Margaret Cranwell – hbec@inhb.co.nz

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre - Preservation workshop.
Iwi and hapū workshop on the preservation of documentary heritage and textiles – in conjunction with the exhibition Kahungunu ka moe ka puta. Contact: Margaret Cranwell – hbec@inhb.co.nz

Marketing and promotion

Rotorua Museum - Exploring community expectations of their museum.
A research project which explores the level of community awareness and expectations of their local museum in order to highlight ways the museum can enhance its profile and effectiveness. Contact: Renee Paul – rpaul@rdc.govt.nz

Revenue generation initiative

NZ Marine Studies Centre - Strategies and solutions to increasing revenue.
Includes a marketing workshop for staff from Otago Peninsula museums and related organisations in the region. Contact: Sally Carson – sally.carson@strongbow.otago.ac.nz

Workshop training opportunities coming up

Make use of these National Services' regional partnership and national workshops coming up over the next six months.



Conservator Rangi Te Kanawa will lead workshops on preventive conservation in Tauranga, Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa. Photo: National Preservation Office

In partnership with Tauranga Museum

Emergency recovery and the salvage of cultural property. A two day workshop led by Tony Clarke for museum staff in the Tauranga region. Venue:

Day 1 – Baycourt seminar rooms

Day 2 – Greerton Fire Station

22 – 23 February 2001

Contact Rachael Davies at Tauranga Museum – thvm@tauranga-dc.govt.nz

In partnership with the West Coast Historical Museum

Collection care. A one day workshop for West Coast museums. Venue: Shantytown.

Date to be confirmed

Contact: Peter Read at West Coast Historical Museum – hokimuseum@xtra.co.nz

In partnership with the Millennium Gallery, Blenheim

Exhibition handling. A two-day practical workshop for Blenheim museums and galleries.

Venue: Millennium Gallery
27-28 January 2001.

Contact: Barbara Speedy at the Millennium Art Gallery – info@artgallery.org.nz

In partnership with the Waikato region museums

A programme of four regional workshops for the Waikato museums network.

Venue: Morrin Museum

First workshop 11 November 2000

Contact: Mike Gribble at Morrin Museum – mgribb@ihug.co.nz

In partnership with Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

Iwi and hapū workshop on the preservation of documentary heritage and textiles – in conjunction with the exhibition Kahungunu ka moe ka puta. Venue: Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre, Hastings

24, 25, 26 January

Contact: Margaret Cranwell – hbec@inhb.co.nz

In partnership with the NZ Marine Studies Centre

Sponsorship and fundraising – how to do it! A workshop for staff from museums and related organisations in Otago led by Briony Ellis (General Manager Funds Development) and Fiona Read (Business Manager Funds Development), Te Papa.

Venue: NZ Marine Studies Centre, Portobello, Otago Peninsula.
7 December 2000

Contact: Sally Carson – sally.carson@strongbow.otago.ac.nz

Note – this workshop also will be offered in Southland in April/May 2001 and in at least one other region. Contact: National Services – phone 04-381-7114 or email natser@tepapa.govt.nz

New Technical Bulletins

Available shortly from Te Papa National Services are seven new technical bulletins.

- Minimising disaster
- Copyright.com – guidelines for museum websites
- How to develop your strategic plan
- Working with the media
- Valuing collections
- Know your visitors
- Tapping into funding sources.

Each museum will receive a complete set.



Te Awanuiarangi Black

Iwi Customary Concepts

National Services would like to hear from museums and iwi interested in working with us to plan and host a workshop on iwi customary concepts in your region/rohe. The workshops usually explore customary concepts relevant to museums and the care of taonga: *What is a Māori/iwi? Rangatiratanga, Kaitiāki, Mauri, Tapu, Mātauranga Māori, Taonga.*

National Services has budgeted for up to three workshops between now and June 2001. In previous years, workshops have been held with Ngāi Tahu and museums in Canterbury and Otago, Ngā Iwi o Te Tau Ihu and Nelson-

Blenheim museums, and in the Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa and Rotorua areas.

Contact: Jennie Harré Hindmarsh or Te Awanuiarangi Black at National Services.

Strategic leadership training

The National Training Framework has identified strategic leadership training as a high priority. National Services is planning to develop a training programme for 2001 for a group of museum directors and senior managers. Expressions of interest to Jennie Harré Hindmarsh please.

Introducing a New Staff Member

In mid-December, National Services looks forward to welcoming Te Awanuiarangi Black to the position of Te Kaihere Ūmanga-ā-iwi National Services Manager Māori.

Ko Mataatua te waka. Ko Toroa te tangata
Ko Mauao rāua ko Kopukairoa ngā maunga
Ko Tauranga te moana. Ko Waitao te awa
Ko Ngāti Pukenga rāua ko Ngāiterangi ngā iwi
Ko Ngāti Kohikino rāua ko Ngāti He ngā hapū
Ko Ngā Pāpaka o Rangataua, he paruparu te kai,
he taniwha ngā tangata
Mauri ora ki te whai ao ki te ao marama.

My name is Te Awanuiarangi Black (Awanui). I am from the shores of Rangataua in Tauranga Moana. My heart is the 'Moana' where I am most tribally active. I am genealogically connected with several Taranaki tribes, Hauraki, Hokianga, Ngāti Raukawa ki Te Tonga and various Scottish clans. I am happily married to Anihera (nee Joe) of Tainui and Taranaki descent. We have 5 children.

I have been active in the Māori world for most of my life. It remains a consuming passion and pastime.

My vocational background has been predominantly in Māori education, where I have taught from new entrant to tertiary level. I have been a researcher, worked as Poutikanga at Tauranga Museum and currently been relieving principal at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Te Pūaha O Waikato.

My vision for this role is one of liberatory praxis, Kaupapa Māori and assisting Māori people realise dreams, goals and aspirations. I believe it is time for our taonga to speak and time for our native spirits to soar high and far.

Korou noa korou ki a koe e koro Uenuku.

NATIONAL SERVICES STAFF AND CONTACT DETAILS

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