

## **Introduction**

2008 saw ever-increasing pressures on New Zealand's museums. These pressures were both financial and social, as funders expected museums to do more with less, and the visiting public had more options for their leisure time, all in a climate of political change and looming global recession.

Museum development projects were reviewed and shelved or significantly reduced. Museums faced budget cuts from local government funders as councils struggled to balance their books while capping rates increases. And museums and galleries continued, despite these pressures, to produce innovative and high quality exhibitions and public programmes, to collect, preserve and protect our national cultural heritage, and to provide a service to their communities and the public.

Museums Aotearoa has been active in support of individual museums as well as on a national level. We have continued the Distributed National Collection (DNC) project, launched the Museums Aotearoa Awards, and completed our second annual statistics survey.

## **ADVOCACY, STRATEGY AND REPRESENTATION**

The Executive Director met with Hon Judith Tizard, Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, 3 times during 2008, both to discuss specific issues and projects, and for general briefing. She also met with staff of the Ministry for Culture & Heritage on a regular basis.

The Executive Director met with Chris Finlayson, National Party spokesperson for arts, culture and heritage, twice early in 2008. Prior to the general election in November, the Executive Director prepared an issues paper and list of questions as a challenge for political parties, which was also a response to National's July arts policy document. This drew some active engagement from the politicians, although a last-minute reply from Labour was disappointing. In the event of National's election win, our challenge proved to have been heard by Hon Chris Finlayson, now our Minister, and the Executive Director met with him to discuss sector issues in early December. This meeting was followed up with a letter and continuing discussion.

We were delighted when the government removed the cap on charitable donations for tax rebate purposes. MA has been active in making submissions on taxation and valuation matters relating to museums for some years, and it is good to feel that at least some of these have been heard. We see this as an opening for museums to improve future income from philanthropic sources, despite the current gloomy economic climate, and this is certainly an area being promoted by Hon Chris Finlayson.

Regular liaison with LGNZ did not result in any specific projects between the organisations, but did serve to keep each other informed. On 13 June the Executive Director made a presentation on the value of

museums to a Rural/Provincial sector meeting of LGNZ. This began a lively discussion, with some councillors and council officers in the audience showing a clear grasp of the issues, and others being alarmingly ill-informed. There is clearly ongoing work to do in advocacy to local government.

Creative NZ went through a major restructure in 2008. This has changed their internal operations as well as their funding regimes. The Executive Director made submissions on CNZ strategy development, and continues to liaise regularly with CNZ staff. There are promising opportunities arising in 2009 for MA as an organisation, and for museum and gallery projects.

### **Nga Taonga – DNC project**

In 2007 we began the task of identifying the 'best' of our national collections distributed throughout the country as a first stage in this project to showcase the depth and breadth of the collections held by museums and art galleries. Museums Aotearoa had been successful in obtaining Lottery Grants Board funding for project management and development, and in 2008 this allowed us to employ a project manager and take steps to articulate the shape of the project. The initial plan for a major touring exhibition with accompanying publication and digital information was broadened into a staged set of interconnected activities to enable more participation outside the four main cities.

The framework as planned at the end of 2008 is to include online collections information, television series and the celebration of a museums month, with possible exhibition projects further in the future. Project priorities for 2009 will be finalising

the business plan, beginning work on a publication, planning for Museums Month, going live with the Nga Taonga widget (the first stage of the digital project), and establishing the parameters of digital collection information access. This project will be more fully reported when the business plan is finalised.

### **National Digital Forum**

PT was invited to join the NDF Board early in 2008 as a co-opted member to boost museum sector input into its governance and activities. She was elected a full member of the Board in the August elections. The digital realm is an area where museum and galleries need to develop more activity, and have much to gain from working within the wider GLAMS grouping.

MA made a submission to the government's draft Digital Strategy 2.0 in May 2008, highlighting the need for practical support for content initiatives including technical support for content providers. We applauded the addition of Collaboration as a key enabler for digital outcomes. The subsequent establishment of the Digital Development Council and Forum, and their uncertain future following the change in government, show that this is an area which will require more lobbying if we are to secure adequate funding and policy support.

### **Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museum Sectors**

In February 2008 PT initiated a meeting of 'GLAMS'. This group comprises the heads of the three national institutions (National Library, Archives NZ, Te Papa) and their professional associations (MA, ARANZ, and LIANZA). Regular quarterly meetings have been established to improve liaison and explore collaborative potential across our shared areas of interest. to work together where possible, identify gaps, and avoid duplication of effort

### **Museum sector survey**

The second museum sector barometer survey was conducted in December 2007, analysed and reported in March 2008. The focus on staff and training gave good information, despite being limited by what is possible using the online survey format. Noting that the December timing was difficult for respondents, we have reverted to February for this now-annual survey.

The value of reliable, timely and comprehensive information about museums and galleries is clear. We use it in our sector advocacy such as making submissions, and members use the information in planning and lobbying for resources. In 2008 we began to explore the possibilities of a wider framework for benchmarking and statistical research, which is being further developed in 2009. MA is committed to continuing to undertake, support and coordinate research on behalf of the museum sector.

### **Diversity Forum**

A forum for museum and gallery staff was co-hosted by MA and Auckland Museum during the Human Rights Commission's Diversity Forum in August. This was attended by about 20 people, including speakers from Pataka, Canterbury and Auckland museums.

There stimulating discussion of the need for addressing issues of diversity, and means of doing so. A particular point raised was the requirement for more detailed information about our existing and potential audiences so we can evaluate the success of diversity programmes – this has informed the continuing development of a research strand of activity for MA.

### **Industry training and staff development**

MA has continued its active role as the museum member of ATTTO, sitting on the Museum Training Council (MTC) and working with ATTTO staff and NSTP to promote and support workplace training. A proposal by the MTC to make qualifications compulsory for museum staff was addressed by the sector at the MA08 conference. While the proposal was defeated, the exposure and discussion of issues around qualifications and training for both museum staff and volunteers has been extremely positive.

ATTTO initiated a Career Maps & Paths project in 2008 which has in turn been a foundation for a Workforce Development Overview Strategy to be completed in 2009. MA has actively supported these projects through consultation, advice and communication with the museum sector.

### **Member support – local govt issues**

With the axing of the Tauranga Museum project following the 2007 local body elections, MA was active in lobbying the Tauranga City Council not to abandon the development of a museum for Tauranga. Despite our letters to MPs, a submission to the TCC annual plan which joined nearly 2000 others in support of the project, and the Executive Director's in-person submission at the plan hearings, the TCC withdrew museum project funding from the LTCCP, and downsized the operation. This is very disappointing, and is an indication of the need to raise the profile of the museum sector and continue advocacy activity in the face of increasing pressure on local government funding for museums and galleries.

In 2008 the new Mayor and councillors in Whangarei made changes to funding and capital plans which were already in their LTCCP, and work on an Arts and Culture Strategy for the District was again derailed, threatening both the Whangarei Museum and Whangarei Art Museum. MA made a submission and personal presentation to annual plan hearings, arguing for continued funding for the museums and a coordinated strategic approach. This has been a difficult time for both museums, and we continue to monitor the situation.

In addition, MA made representations and submissions to councils in support of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Otago Settlers Museum and Whanganui Regional Museum. We also provided information and assistance to many other MA members in support of their own representations to councils.

## COMMUNICATION AND MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

### Publications

The project to transfer *Te Ara* from a print publication to an online journal, begun in 2007, was finally completed in 2008. While the process was frustratingly slow, the end result has been very successful. Further work will need to be done in 2009 to ensure *Te Ara's* future sustainability.

*Museums Aotearoa Quarterly* was published 4 times in 2008. MAQ contains information and articles of immediate interest, both written in house and submitted by members and other agencies. Introduced in 2007 to fill the communication gap for a hard-copy informal newsletter, MAQ has proved to be well-read and informative.

The monthly *e-museumsNEWS* included over 700 stories about museums and galleries nation-wide. We continue to receive increasing amounts of news from our clippings service. This shows that museums are being more successful in attracting coverage, and hopefully thereby improving public awareness of our activities. MA featured in 14 items, mostly relating to the Museums Aotearoa Awards and to council submissions.

We circulated 17 compilations of *e-museums-NOTICES* and 110 vacancies throughout the year. Vacancies are also listed on the MA website. Statistics show steadily growing viewing numbers for the website, especially around conference or *Te Ara*, but also for other publications and information. The website is a means of communication which has enormous growth potential for MA.

### MA08 conference

The 2008 conference – *Museum people: the human collection* – was hosted by Dunedin Public Art Gallery in April. Keynote speaker David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool, challenged us to think about the ongoing need for change in museums, pressures and trends, ways and means of achieving change, and the role played by the key resource in museums, our staff. The 170 participants heard and shared a range of case studies and workshops around staffing and management, and debated the need for museum and gallery staff to have relevant qualifications. Dunedin Public Art Gallery staff were generous and welcoming hosts, and we acknowledge also the Dunedin City Council, Octa Associates, ATTTTO and all our other supporters who made it such a positive and enjoyable conference.

### Inaugural Museums Aotearoa Awards

Our first celebration of achievement in the museum was the presentation of three awards at a gala dinner during the MA09 conference in Dunedin. Jenny Gibbs joined judges Jane Legget and Greg McManus to select winners and finalists in the categories of exhibitions and public programmes, innovation and individual achievement. Hon Judith Tizard and Jenny Gibbs presented the awards, which were generously supported by Selecon NZ Ltd. The standard of entries

confirmed our belief that there is excellent work being undertaken by teams and individuals in museums and art galleries across New Zealand, and that these achievements deserve to be recognised by peers as well as showcased more widely to promote the museum sector. We look forward to continuing the MA awards as an annual programme.

### Intercom conference

The Executive Director was on the planning group of the 2008 conference of Intercom, ICOM's International Committee on Museum Management, hosted by the Rotorua Museum in November. The theme of *Museums and Tourism* drew and enthusiastic attendance of over 120, including delegates from Mexico, Kenya, Tanzania and Taiwan as well as NZ and Australia. As Chair of two sessions, Phillipa enjoyed the opportunity to engage with the individuals and issues raised. Greg McManus and Rotorua Museum are to be congratulated on hosting a very stimulating and successful conference.

### Scholarships

The partnership between Asia NZ Foundation and MA has continued, and three projects submitted for funding in 2008 are being undertaken in 2009.

The Mina McKenzie Scholarship was reviewed in 2007-08 with a view to improving its effectiveness. As the capital fund is not large, MA is working to develop a partnership with the Maori Education Trust which will draw on their greater resources and experience in administering educational scholarships. We expect to complete this process in 2009.

Following the initial 5-year commitment to the Clark Collection / Creative New Zealand scholarship by Errol Clark, we undertook a review in late 2007. This showed that the scholarship has been very effective in adding to the level of professional skill in the decorative arts and built heritage in NZ, and Mr Clark agreed to support the scholarship in its current form for a further 3 years. An application in 2008 was successful for securing CNZ support for 2009 – support for future years will be sought under their new funding regime.

Priscilla Pitts, Heritage Destination Manager, NZ Historic Places Trust, was the 2008 scholar. She reported an energising and fruitful experience, which is already being influential in her work in leading the management and interpretation of NZHPT properties.

### Membership

Membership numbers remain steady, with a slight decrease in Individual members. This probably reflects both the introduction of Associate Membership (which is classed as Individual membership within our Rules) and a reduction in

employers paying individual membership fees for staff in addition to institutional membership, as well as a more rigorous office policy of removing non-payers from our database.

	<i>museums</i>	<i>individual</i>	<i>associate</i>
2005	152	169	0
2006	147	215	3
2007	167	206	14
2008	167	191	16

**Staff**

Phillipa Tocker as Executive Director and Fiona King as Office Manager (half time) remain in office, supported by accountant Gina Lumplecker on contract. Jane Legget continues to edit *Te Ara*, and from July-December Eric Dorfman took the part time position as DNC Project Manager. We were assisted in some part time and voluntary work by several museum studies students, as well as the contributions of individual members on a number of projects.

**USA study tour**

In September-October the Executive Director was fortunate to participate in a US government-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Program. The group of 18 professionals from museums, academies, government departments and cultural organisations in 16 different countries toured a range of sites, institutions and agencies looking at and discussing issues around cultural heritage preservation. It was fascinating to see the similarities and differences between the US and NZ, as well as to share the experience with such a diverse group. Valuable contacts were made, friendships established, and thousands of photographs still await sorting.

**Administration**

MA was successfully registered as a charity with the Charities Commission. Our annual audit and return to the companies Office were successfully completed. We began an overhaul of MA's filing systems in late 2008, being completed in 2009. Plans to upgrade our database systems have been deferred until 2009 pending a full review of needs and options.

**Financial result**

Comparison of MA's budget for the last 6 years:

	<i>income</i>	<i>expenditure</i>	<i>balance</i>
2003	\$ 305,104	\$ 247,848	\$ 57,276
2004	\$ 256,806	\$ 317,190	(\$ 60,384)
2005	\$ 165,032	\$ 221,695	(\$ 56,663)
2006	\$ 222,757	\$ 226,643	(\$ 3,886)
2007	\$ 254,152	\$ 240,453	\$ 13,699
2008	\$ 321,992	\$ 288,155	\$ 33,838



**Lesley Colsell**  
Chair

17 April 2009

These figures reflect the reduction in CNZ core funding from \$145,000 in 2003, and \$50,000 in 2004, to zero since 2005, and the deliberate Board decision to operate a loss in 2004 and 2005 to develop the sector strategy. The increased financial activity over the last 3 years reflects higher conference budgets and more project funding from external sources.

Our 2008 surplus results from a successful MA08 conference (with higher sponsorship and considerably lower speakers' expenses than budgeted), the deferral of publication of the *Directory*, change of timing for the sector survey, and a continuing careful approach to expenditure. We expect to continue a similar level of activity within a break-even budget for 2009.

**Kaitiaki Māori in Museums**

In August a hui in Gisborne was attended by some 25 Kaitiaki from museums around New Zealand. This was the first such hui for some years, and thanks are due to Rhonda Paku, Monty Soutar and Tairawhiti Museum for making it happen. The group considered ways of supporting Māori working in museums, and how to better enable Māori to be substantially involved at all levels of the museum sector. Some positive outcomes were the confirmation of MA as the umbrella organisation for Kaitiaki Māori including the nomination of a Kaitiaki representative for the Board, and a commitment to work with NSTP to develop specific programmes and initiatives that enhance the roles and the work being carried out by Kaitiaki Māori.

**Museums Aotearoa Board**

Chair Priscilla Pitts and Individual Member Chas Charlton resigned at the 2008 AGM. They were replaced by Bill Macnaught and Linda Tyler, with Lesley Colsell taking the Chair and Bill Macnaught Deputy Chair. In September Lauren Sadlier replaced Chanel Clarke as Kaitiaki representative. We thank all former Board members for their contribution to guiding the organisation.

**Future planning**

Towards the end of 2008, the Board debated how MA can best channel its energy and resources into serving the museum sector. Being reliant primarily on membership fees for operational costs, it is vital that activities are prioritised to meet members' needs. There is always more that a peak professional body could do given more resources – the 'piece of string' is endless – so the 2009 work plan was developed to identify the main areas of activity, as published in the December MAQ.



**Phillipa Tocker**  
Executive Director