



NEW ZEALAND  
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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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ADDRESS TO HISTORIC PLACES TRUST TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

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This session looks to the future - to project forward the relationship between the Trust and the department in two years' time.

The Department of Conservation is almost four months old. That period has been a time of transition and of adjustment, both personally for staff, in career development terms, and of course for the organisation itself. The theory of departmental structure - both territorially and functionally - which was developed in the back rooms of Wellington, has had to be tested in the real world. People have come together from a diversity of backgrounds, with a variety of experience, to pick up the responsibilities assigned to the department.

With some adjustments the organisation is now operational. I would suggest that we are still in a largely 'reactive mode' - that is, we are still largely reactive to the pressures and demands of people and of the conservation estate itself, rather than rising above immediate crises, gaining a perspective and planning ahead. We are still learning all of the dimensions of our responsibilities - some of which have clearly been under-resourced in staff and funds. We still have much of the baggage of the past - the old agencies, quite reasonably, told people that they were unable to deal with their problems because of the reorganisation. Now many of those problems have become urgent and people are not particularly tolerant of the department's desire to take things slowly at first - so that decisions are able to be taken on an adequate policy basis. We have inherited at least two High Court actions against past decisions of the old agencies. There are many Planning Tribunal hearings impatient of resolution on matters now the responsibility of the department. Any brief 'honeymoon' period we have had is past. We must now perform and provide the services our clients demand.

I have given you all this background so that you might appreciate that our focus has been very much on horizons that are close - dealing with crises rather than indulging in long term planning. Prognostications two years out from now must therefore be judged in that light - we have needed to get a new department up and running rather than see where it is headed. While we have individual thoughts as to direction, these need to be gathered in to a corporate planning process which will give us collective goals and objectives.

However, there are some immediate implications of the new department and its relationship with the Trust which are apparent, and these give a guide as to directions for the future.

There is a good 'feeling' about the department now - it is staffed with people strongly committed to conservation who are ready and keen to pick up the challenges. Indeed, many of the internal pressures of right now relate as much to the demands for policy guidance to get on with the job, and for resources of staff and finance to explore the horizons and pursue new directions.

The mission of conservation, which equates with protection and guardianship, is strong within the department. We have a firm mandate along such lines in the Conservation Act - legislation enacted only in March of this year. This Act provides the department with responsibilities which parallel those of the Historic Places Trust. Already, therefore, we might expect a quite different relationship between the Trust and the Department than that with Internal Affairs.

The department has the potential to focus considerable resources to assist the Trust with its mission. This is particularly true at the regional level in terms of professional servicing. We have approximately 2000 staff and, while we appreciate that we have inherited a substantial imbalance between the expertise to manage the natural environment compared to the historic and cultural, we will be making a conscious effort to redress the imbalance. For instance, even though we are naturally faced with substantial one-off costs of setting up the department, we have still been able to nearly double this year's cash grant to the work of the Trust.

The old agencies, particularly Forest Service and Lands & Survey, carried responsibilities for the management of many land areas containing relics and features of our collective New Zealand past. We can acknowledge the intensive archaeological investigations of sites as far apart as Northland and South Westland. There are examples of the protection, interpretation and restoration of elements of European history throughout the country. Notable amongst these are the kauri logging dams of Great Barrier Island and the Coromandel, the features of the Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park, goldfields restoration work at Waiuta and Ross on the West Coast, and at Rolling River in Nelson and, of course, the Otago Goldfields Park. There were associations with coalfields history at the Denniston Incline and the Charming Creek Walkway.

Because of this inheritance - for which we must acknowledge the excellent work of the old agencies - the Department has good 'bona fides' to be assisting the work of the Trust.

We are working with the Trust Board and its committees to establish integrated management systems at the regional level, which will greatly assist and improve the Trust's work at the sharp end. This is where Regional Committees should see the greatest gains. Because the department, with its complementary responsibilities, is essentially a regionally based organisation with a strong commitment to decentralisation, I am confident that we will be able to provide a vital link between Regional Committees and the Central Office and Board in Wellington.

I mentioned the imbalance of resources between the management of the natural and the historic resources. However, there is a common philosophical commitment to protection and conservation in the planning systems which have been developed to identify and manage protected natural areas. These systems, I am sure, can be applied to historic and cultural sites, and the planning expertise gained in their implementation will be valuable in advancing historic work of a similar nature.

There are clearly gaps of expertise in some regions, and by recruitment and training we will be endeavouring to improve the department's capability as soon as possible. We know that Regional Committees can assist us most profitably - we appreciate the local knowledge and expertise you have, and Regional and District Managers will be seeking your assistance with planning and management decisions.

It will be a really exciting challenge to have the department and Trust infrastructure working together in more systematic ways to identify and protect historic sites of natural significance. Nowhere is the need for a more structured approach more important than in the field of archaeology to identify 'key sites'. A systematic inventory will lead the way to decisions on the sites to be afforded permanent protection and interpretation, as well as the sites for which some modification may be authorised.

I am realistic enough to know that the development of such methodology will take time and care, but the wider scientific and management resources of the department can greatly assist the process.

I think at this point it is appropriate for me to note that we recognise the strength of the private citizen involvement and expertise which has typified and exemplified the Trust's activities. I therefore want to assure you that DOC

does not want to replace or in any way diminish that involvement. To the contrary, we will do all that we can to widen the private citizen membership and involvement in the Trust and in DOC's activities on behalf of the Trust. To this end I consider it is important that the separate identity of the Trust is fostered and enhanced. While we believe a pooling of expertise to be desirable, the separate identity of the Trust must be maintained. This way we can enjoy the best of both worlds.

I hope that I have been able to show that the department has a mandate, an inheritance and a responsibility to manage historic resources along with the natural environment, and that this pool of decentralised expertise is available to assist the Trust in its work.

Over the next two years we would expect to develop these relationships to mutual benefit. What should we look to in the way of specifics?

### 1. Archaeology

We are already on the way towards having regional archaeologists, either as staff members, or as contractors - at least in respect of those regions where there is a greater concentration of pre-European sites. This should be consolidated over the next two years.

Given such a level of regional expertise, we should look to decentralise the processing of authorities under the Trust's Act to regions.

### 2. Property Management

An aim for the shorter term should be an integrated structure for the administration of the Trust's properties along with those of the Department. The problems of property management are the same, the level of expertise required is the same - so management united under a Regional Property Officer appears to have merit. The department would of course recognise that, to the extent that existing staff working on Trust properties were applied to the wider, integrated task, further resources may need to be applied, perhaps at curator level, to ensure no less an overall servicing on Trust properties than at present.

### 3. Regulatory responsibilities

I have covered the availability of scientific advice and systems for identification and protection of key sites. Further services will be available in terms of land administration and

transactions, and in the area of statutory planning. These regional resources should be used to provide a comprehensive service to the work of the Trust.

Finally, in looking two years out, I would invite the Trust to examine itself. Reorganisation is touching every aspect of the Public Service - indeed few areas of administration, commerce or business have escaped the pressures to review their operating basis in these times of rapid change. The Government postponed a review of the quangos associated with environmental administration last year, while the department was being set up, but the timetable for review will now go ahead.

I have offered the personal view that the identity and independence of the Trust must be maintained. Clearly the strength of citizen input and involvement in the Trust is entirely in keeping with Government philosophy for consultation with, and community involvement in the work of conservation generally.

Perhaps the appropriate direction for development is towards the model epitomised by the National Trust in Great Britain - a private citizen organised, resourced and operated body. Or, at the opposite extreme, perhaps the appropriate direction is for the work of the Trust to be completely integrated in the departmental structure, following a model similar to the National Parks and Reserves Authority - with the Trust or its equivalent Board having policy, management planning and oversight responsibilities, along with a complementary regional board structure.

Or, perhaps the present Board structure will prove entirely appropriate for future needs - I would hesitate to express any firm opinion.

It does seem desirable, however, for the Trust to recognise the usefulness of carrying out a review and to be prepared with comments and input of its own into the environmental quango review coming up.

The relationship then - in two years' time. I believe that the promise which I have offered, for support for the Trust's work - which is after all 100% consistent with the role of the Department of Conservation - will have been fully realised.