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Frontispiece

Katharine Watson thanking Rick McGovern-Wilson for his service to NZAA after he stepped down from Council this year. He first joined the Council in 1985 as Treasurer.

Editorial

No-one can have missed the events at Ihumatao over recent weeks. It is a complex situation, in which archaeology is only one ingredient; the history of land confiscations, the Treaty (and parameters of the Treaty settlement process), and tribal authority are amongst the many other critical factors. But archaeology, with its unique ability to provide tangible evidence of links to the land has been a key part of the debate, and we all need to be aware of the implications of this. While many developers probably view archaeology as simply an expensive nuisance, it is more than pits and old bottles; it is the only discipline that can place people, time and place together with absolute confidence. And in any adversarial legal situation regarding land occupation archaeological practice is in both a powerful and dangerous position. Powerful due to its provable objective results, and dangerous because of the subjective nature of archaeological interpretation and the possibility of two expert witnesses being pitted against each other. Consultants do not often select their clients, and they could easily find themselves engaged in a debate with considerable financial and ethical stakes. The above is not a commentary on Ihumatao: it is a comment on some of the wider implications for archaeologists that situations like Ihumatao raise. We should pay careful attention to the events up north, as it is not the last time that archaeology will be involved in wider political debates.

In order to provide another voice here, Dave Veart, who has been involved with the area for over 30 years, has provided a guest commentary on Ihumatao. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga was also asked if they would like to comment, but (understandably due to the organisation's legal involvement) has not responded.

In other news, a great step forward by Heritage New Zealand was the July launch of the online Digital Library. The creation of the original Digital Library in 2007 was a great advance on the previous situation where reports were held only in hard copy in Wellington, but the digital files were not searchable and could not be viewed or downloaded online (you could download an excel index, and then request individual files to be emailed). The new system is searchable, and makes the grey literature immediately accessible. The digital library can be found at:

<https://www.heritage.org.nz/protecting-heritage/archaeology/digital-library>

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