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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

In the September issue of *Archaeology in New Zealand*, under the discussion on the East Coast site record file, we are told that the district file is being checked against ArchSite and all extra material scanned, so as to be accessible via ArchSite. Curiously the original paper material will then be divided, the correspondence relating to the East Coast going to the local museum and the rest to the Central File in Wellington. As a pilot, we can presume that there will be a similar division of the material in each other district, and the bulk of the original paper files, along with the Central File duplicates, will all be held in Wellington.

We realise that this decision was made by Council some time ago, though we are aware of at least two other filekeepers besides myself are very unhappy about the local material all going to Wellington. In the light of the effects of the Christchurch earthquake, we would like Council to reconsider this decision. It has always been known that a very similar earthquake could affect the Wellington area. North Islanders may not be aware of the drastic effects on very simple things such as the distribution of milk and bread, animal feed and many grocery products that the earthquake had. Good management reduced much of the possible effects such as the outbreak of electrically-induced fires, but good luck that the quake happened at 4.30 am also helped. Wellington may not be so lucky.

If the correspondence can stay in Gisborne, why not the rest of the file? Why if we have used the dispersed system of two paper copies in different places should we not continue with it? The original paper copies can last several hundred years with passive care, but electronic copies require constant active care as software changes. The paper copies are in fact local taonga. We ask Council to reconsider the decision to remove all the original paper copies from the districts where they belong.

Jill Hamel and Shar Briden