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THE CENTRE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

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This brief paper announces the establishment of a Centre for Archaeological Research at the University of Auckland. This initiative is timely because developments in archaeology over the past twenty years have led to major advances in our ability to recover, analyze and interpret evidence on a range of aspects of pre-European and early historic societies. This has led to a situation in which interdisciplinary research, especially in the physical and biological sciences, is vital to success. However, the necessary skills and technology are currently spread over a number of disciplines, departments, universities and other research institutions. Those working on archaeological matters at the University of Auckland have collaborative relationships with many of these at present but the Centre will enable those connections to be formalised, stabilised and extended.

Previously, individual staff members have pursued their own projects in a number of loosely connected programmes focused on New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific. They have given archaeology in the department a high profile as a centre of excellence in the field. However, a more integrative approach is necessary to maintain the momentum that has built up and to further enhance our effectiveness.

Therefore, we have established a Centre which will facilitate the effective combination of these resources, develop funding of research projects and promote the further development of excellence in our joint research.

The name "Archaeological Research" has been chosen to reflect the fundamental methodology which provides the basic research focus and data source. However, given that the analysis and interpretation of these data can involve the use of methods and techniques from any of the physical sciences, as well as social and historical scholarship, and given that the goal of the centre is to integrate these diverse contributions the name should not be considered restrictive.

What Is It?

The Centre is a collection of research facilities combined administratively to:

1. form a centre of excellence for modern archaeological research encompassing the region of New Zealand, the South Pacific, and Australia.

Specifically, the Centre will address the following aims:

- a. enhancement of level of collaborations through acting to coordinate the activities of research personnel within and beyond the university;
 - b. provision of expertise to New Zealand Maori and other groups concerned to recover or conserve taonga and to assist these groups in the generation of historical information;
 - c. to offer practical archaeological expertise and training to indigenous, private and government agencies within the Pacific region.
2. facilitate establishment of collaborative research projects among University groups with interests relevant to archaeological research.
 3. increase opportunities available to graduate and post-graduate students and the experience to which they are exposed, and to help retain talented students.
 4. provide a panel of expertise for consulting purposes via Uniservices which is the commercial arm of the University of Auckland.

The Centre is based in the Anthropology department, Auckland University, on the seventh and eight floors of the Human Science Building. It has access to a set of well equipped laboratories on level 7 and 8 (microscopy, conservation, soil and material analysis, survey, computer analysis and mapping, geophysical survey, general).

Research underway at present focuses on the colonisation of the Pacific Basin and the subsequent adaptation and diversification of colonisers within this region.

This is divisible into the following broad areas:

Colonisation: Prehistory of the first water crossings in island Southeast Asia 40,000 years ago and the first settlement of the remote Pacific islands after 3500 years ago.

Dispersal and Environmental Impact: Identification of earliest human impact on pristine environments and reconstruction of anthropogenic ecological change using archaeological, palynological and sedimentological evidence.

Trade and Exchange: Sourcing of a wide range of materials (obsidian, chert, basalt, ceramics using geochemical (XRF, PIXE/PIGME, INAA) and petrographic data) and constructing models of economic and social relationship to explain the distribution over wide geographic regions.

Technology and Material Culture: The analysis and explanation of morphological variation in items of material culture as a means of measuring cultural and functional diversity.

Landscape Archaeology: The spatial relationships of sites to their natural settings, social contexts, and symbolic worlds in a temporal framework examining between and within settlement relationships.

Historical Archaeology: Archaeological and text-based research on Maori and European society from contact to 1850, and Maori and European historic and industrial sites up to the recent past.

Artefact Conservation: The Conservation Laboratory, which is run by Dilys Johns, offers a service which includes advice and/or treatment available to iwi, runanga, public institutions and archaeologists nationwide and in the Pacific. The resident conservator is also actively involved in research within her area of specialisation - wet organic archaeological material. Current research includes an experimental study of waterlogged wood conservation techniques - comparison of sucrose impregnation followed by freeze drying and experiments to ascertain the best consolidant for blocklifting bone in damp, sandy matrix. The latter is being written up for publication.

Palaeo-ecology: Reconstruction of prehistoric environments through wood charcoal and landsnail analysis. In addition, Dr Rod Wallace specialises in the identification of wood and charcoal for radiocarbon dating.

Cultural Resource Management: Impact mitigation analysis and technical advice to developers, iwi and conservation authorities. Also management of surveys and salvage excavations where these coordinate with ongoing research problems and programmes.

On the basis of present collaboration with groups in the Department of Conservation, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and iwi groups, runanga and Maori Trusts the Centre has expended to include field projects organised jointly with these organisations, at several locations within New Zealand. In addition, we intend to strengthen research and training relationships with Pacific Islands groups where museum and archaeological services in the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, New Guinea and Indonesia may want support and professional input.

The Centre consists at present of the archaeologists in the Anthropology Department, University of Auckland with Professor Sir I. Hugh Kawharu, who advises on matters related to Maori archaeology, Assoc. Prof. P. Barker (Physics Department, University of Auckland) and Dr R. Parker (Geology Department, University of Auckland). The Management Committee consists of a Director and co-Director, chosen by election, the HOD Anthropology and a nominee of the

Auckland University Research Committee (currently Professor Julie Maxton of the Law School). The Director and co-Director are Dr D.G. Sutton and Dr P.J. Sheppard, respectively.

The Management Committee has the following functions:

- (i) identifying sources of research funds and sponsorship outside the university.
- (ii) promoting the work and facilities available in the centre to Government, Tangata Whenua and other interested groups.
- (iii) co-ordinating research proposals and applications for funding.
- (iv) organisation of collaborations and distribution of funds from external agencies.
- (v) overseeing the Centre's activities to ensure proper use of the Department's resources, protection of student interests, etc.
- (vi) reporting annually to Research Committee.

Members of the Centre are able to seek support from funding agencies for their own work as at present. However, a major objective of the Centre is to attract funding from a wider range of sources than is currently involved.

Conflicts between expectations of external sponsors and the realities of academic research might arise when students are involved in externally funded projects, when the distinction between targeted and basic research becomes blurred. To minimize these conflicts, the Centre undertakes only those projects which require basic research as the major, or only, component, in accordance with guidelines laid down by Auckland University Research Committee. Similarly, research projects and contracts are subject to approval by Research Committee in the normal manner. All commercial contracts are managed through Uniservices. Project applications incorporate provisions to ensure the academic independence and right to publication by staff and students.

Since it was established in November 1992 the Centre has secured funding from the Foundation of Research, Science and Technology for the development of obsidian hydration dating in New Zealand and the third year of the attempt to define the date of first settlement of Northland-Auckland through pollen and sedimentological studies. It has also negotiated a year-long contract, through Uniservices, for forestry contract archaeology on Matakana Island in the Western Bay of Plenty. Extension of the Matakana contract is currently being negotiated. A month-long excavation of burials at the Sigatoka dune site in Fiji has been funded by the European Community, through the Fiji Museum, and is to occur late in 1993.

Dr Christopher Stevenson, of Archaeological Services Inc., Columbus, Ohio, is employed on the Obsidian Hydration Project, 2 August 1993 - November 1 1994. Professor John Flenley runs the pollen research from the Geography Department at Massey University. Dr Yvonne Marshall, is Field Director of the work on Matakana with a crew of three, nominated by iwi (21 July 1993 - March 1994). Some other contract possibilities are being discussed at present.

Conclusion:

Archaeologists are particularly conscious of the limited job opportunities which exist in New Zealand and of the very high numbers of masters and PhD students enrolled in our discipline. Historically, securing employment has been a major problem, and that is unlikely to be relieved through either the Crown agencies and regional museums as both appear to be retrenching at present, rather than expanding markedly. We are conscious also that there are several New Zealand born archaeologists abroad, some holding PhD's, who are interested in working here if appropriate jobs can be secured.

We are also aware of the recurrent tendency for archaeological expertise here to be generated, concentrated and then dissipated, because funding is withdrawn, and simply the number of archaeologists working here may simply be too small at present to maintain actively a full range of skills. The Centre may have some impact in each of these areas: paid practical experience and training for some graduate students; an ability to fund investigative research necessary to the development of analytical facilities (OHD is the present example); and an interest in running those facilities professionally on the revenue-generation necessary to keep them running.

Finally, we've sometimes seen archaeology sitting somewhat awkwardly on marae. The Centre may be able to contribute in that area. The forestry contract on Matakana provides a simple protocol which may be of use in the future. The nature and timing of the work was negotiated with the iwi, the work began only when the forests and the iwi agreed, the work is undertaken by an iwi-selected fieldcrew and directed in the field by an archaeologist of good standing, information generated by the project is to be released simultaneously to all parties; that is, the Crown agencies, the forestry corporation and the iwi and site management strategies are to be negotiated on the local marae, with Crown agencies and the corporate present, on the basis of the archaeological information and iwi knowledge of the area.