

9 Whiringa-ā-nuku 2024

Craig Innes
craig.b.innes@gmail.com

Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand,
10 Mulgrave Street, Wellington
Phone +64 499 5595
Websites www.archives.govt.nz
www.dia.govt.nz

E te rangatira e Craig, tēnā koe

Complaint about Collections Search and access to archives

Thank you for your email, received on 20 August 2024, to the Secretary of Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs (Te Tari Taiwhenua), Paul James, making a complaint about Collections Search and access to archives. As your complaint falls within my remit as Chief Archivist, it has been sent to me for response.

I note that your complaint was initially submitted through fyi.org.nz in June this year. Due to an administrative oversight, your complaint was not responded to at the same time as the Official Information Act requests you submitted at that time. I apologise for the delay in providing you with a response.

You have written that Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand (Te Rua Mahara) is failing to meet our obligations under section 47 of the Public Records Act 2005 (the Act) to provide access to public records.

Section 47 of the Act states, in summary, that an open access record must be made available for inspection free of charge as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The means by which we provide access to archives free of charge is our Reading Rooms in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Over 2 million digitised open access items are also available online through Collections Search, at no cost.

Funding for our digitisation programme Te Maeatanga, including Te whakamatihiko ā-ono Digitisation on demand paid service, was time limited through to 30 June 2024 with no further funding available. Te Rua Mahara will continue to look for other avenues of sustainable, assured funding to bring digitisation back online in the future.

I am confident that Collections Search makes the public records in our care discoverable. The keyword search and filtering system supports users to find records, and additional fields can be added in the advanced search.

Kia pono ai te rua Mahara – Enabling trusted government information

Te Rua Mahara acknowledges that since the replacement of the Archway database with Collections Search, some researchers have faced barriers with using the system, and it has been frustrating for many. We are invested in improving Collections and continue to work with the vendor on updates and enhancements.

Our kaimahi and volunteers continue to list and describe more and more records each day, which are then added to the Collections database to make our holdings more accessible.

Public records can also be identified in other ways, including manual systems such as finding aids, indexes, and registers. You can find out more through our Research guidance on our webpage at <https://www.archives.govt.nz/research-guidance>.

We also encourage the use of our 'Ask an Archivist' service so our Archivists can perform a search and provide an export of records. This service is available on our webpage at <https://www.archives.govt.nz/about-us/services-we-offer/ask-an-archivist>.

Thank you again for writing.

Ngā mihi, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AR' followed by a stylized flourish.

Anahera Morehu
Poumanaaki Chief Archivist