

National Archival and Library Institutions Ministerial Group

To	NALI Ministerial Group
From	Karen Adair, Group Manager, Policy and Sector Performance, Ministry for Culture and Heritage Marilyn Little, Deputy Chief Executive, Policy Regulation and Communities, the Department of Internal Affairs
Date of meeting	Meeting 2: 25 June 2018
Paper 3	Challenges and opportunities for Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision

Purpose of this paper

1. This paper supplements the current state information about Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision (Ngā Taonga) in Paper 2 for the NALI Ministerial Group meeting of 28 May 2018.¹ It provides more information about current challenges and opportunities for Ngā Taonga, focusing on property, access and preservation. It also considers briefly some opportunities for collaboration with other organisations.

Background

2. Ngā Taonga was formed in 2014 as a result of the amalgamation of three collections: the New Zealand Film Archive, Radio New Zealand's Sound Archives Ngā Taonga Kōrero (RNZ Archive) and the Television New Zealand Archive (TVNZ Archive). The amalgamation of these collections has left Ngā Taonga with a diverse property portfolio to manage, and with a legacy of different databases and systems. The size of Ngā Taonga's collection is also significantly larger than that held by its predecessor, the New Zealand Film Archive. In addition, Ngā Taonga faces challenges in common with other archival organisations of preserving and providing access to items in a wide range of formats, including some that are obsolete or very fragile.

¹ Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision is the operating name for the New Zealand Archive of Film, Television and Sound Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua me Ngā Taonga Kōrero.

Property issues

Current property portfolio

3. Ngā Taonga has been consolidating its property portfolio, and is seeking to consolidate further. At present, Ngā Taonga is using the following properties:
 - a) a head office, shopfront (including a cinema) and storage facility in Taranaki Street, central Wellington;
 - b) vaults at Avalon, Lower Hutt, where the TVNZ and RNZ Archives are stored;
 - c) storage vaults at Titahi Bay and Plimmerton, near Porirua;
 - d) storage for documentation and corporate records at Buckle Street, Wellington; and
 - e) satellite offices in central Auckland, and Addington, Christchurch.
4. Ngā Taonga formerly owned its Taranaki Street premises, but sold this property in April 2018. Ngā Taonga considers the property is no longer fit for purpose because:
 - a) it is earthquake-prone (below 34 per cent of the New Building Standard) and is also within the tsunami self-evacuation zone; and
 - b) Ngā Taonga's collection has outgrown the storage space in the Taranaki Street building.
5. As an interim measure, Ngā Taonga is leasing the Taranaki Street building, but this is not sustainable in the long term. The current lease ends in April 2021, but Ngā Taonga could be required to leave as early as April 2020. Ngā Taonga's Board considers prolonged occupation of an earthquake-prone building to be highly unsatisfactory, both for staff and for collections.
6. The Avalon storage facility is currently owned by the Department of Internal Affairs, which grants access to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH). MCH, in turn, grants a licence to occupy the facility to Ngā Taonga as the manager, on MCH's behalf, of the TVNZ Archive. No rent is paid for the Avalon lease, but Ngā Taonga pays an annual fee of \$275,000 for power and other costs associated with the facility.

Relocation and consolidation options

7. Ngā Taonga has already reduced its property footprint from seven to five storage facilities, plus two satellite offices. It is now seeking to meet the twin objectives of further property consolidation and relocation from the Taranaki Street building. Ngā Taonga has until April 2021, at the latest, to leave the Taranaki Street building, but will need to identify and secure an alternative much sooner than that date.
8. Ngā Taonga has been exploring two main options for relocating its head office and collections currently housed in Taranaki Street. Both of these options would require additional funding, as the income from selling the Taranaki Street property will not fully cover the costs of establishing new premises, building vaults and maintaining service levels. Ngā Taonga does not have significant reserves set aside for major capital projects.

9. The first option is to expand its footprint at the Avalon site by building more offices and vault space for the people and collections relocating from Taranaki Street. Work would also be required to mitigate the flood risk from the nearby Hutt River. s9(2)(j)

10. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

13. Regardless of the location chosen for Ngā Taonga's headquarters and storage facility, it would still want to maintain a venue in central Wellington for public access to Ngā Taonga's collections.

[REDACTED] s9(2)(f)(iv)

[REDACTED]

Improving access

15. Ngā Taonga is keen to improve the discoverability of and access to material in its collections. Obstacles to this objective include:

- a) Ngā Taonga's ageing ICT infrastructure and multiple databases inherited from its constituent collections; and
- b) lack of sufficient resourcing to preserve, catalogue, clear rights, digitise and put online more than a small percentage of its collection.

16. In addition to investing in the ICT infrastructure that supports its core business, Ngā Taonga has identified that by investing in scalable solutions, there is significant potential to offer cost-effective audiovisual ICT solutions to key industry, community and iwi groups (for example, TVNZ, RNZ, programme makers, regional and iwi archives, and schools). Such solutions could:

- a) make archiving new, born digital material more straightforward and cost-effective; and
- b) provide access to collections in ways that foster innovation.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Current funding discussions

19. MCH currently provides Ngā Taonga with annual funding of \$5.02 million, consisting of:
 - a) \$3.02 million in general operational funding (including archiving of the RNZ Archive); and
 - b) \$2 million for managing the TVNZ Archive.
20. The RNZ Archive was absorbed by the then New Zealand Film Archive in 2012. This added an additional 110,000 items to the existing collection of 265,000 items. The Film Archive received a one-off payment of \$1 million for digitisation of the RNZ Archive collection, and ongoing annual funding of \$0.79 million for managing the RNZ Archive.
21. The incorporation of the TVNZ Archive more than doubled the size of Ngā Taonga's collection, adding a further 435,000 items. Ngā Taonga received additional funding of \$2 million annually for managing the TVNZ Archive. In addition, significant expectations of increased public access to the TVNZ collection were created. Ngā Taonga now has a collection of some 800,000 items, and funding per item has decreased from \$15 to \$8.70.
22. It is normal for audiovisual archives to have backlogs of archival work to be undertaken. However, the scale of backlogs resulting from the addition of two major broadcast collections, along with the rapid advance of audiovisual technology and the obsolescence of critical equipment, mean that Ngā Taonga is struggling with the amount of work required simply to perform its key functions as an archive. This creates significant inefficiencies in the delivery of services to clients, including access to collections. Ngā Taonga is currently sizing and quantifying its archival backlogs so that it is well placed to articulate the scale of the tasks involved.

23. MCH has agreed to review the funding contract with Ngā Taonga over the second half of 2018, to ensure that the price settings and targets for digitisation and online access are correct. A particular issue is that Ngā Taonga considers that government funding for managing the TVNZ Archive is not consistent with the scale of the increase in Ngā Taonga's collection, or with the government's expectations of the level of digitisation of and online access to content from the TVNZ Archive.

Preservation

24. Ngā Taonga faces challenges in preserving its collection across a range of formats. However, a particularly pressing challenge is preservation of the Betacam collection from the TVNZ Archive.

Betacam collection: the issue

25. About 25 per cent of the TVNZ Archive (around 200,000 tapes) is on a 1980s video format called Betacam, and is at risk of being lost. This content is owned by the Crown and managed by Ngā Taonga.
26. Betacam tape was used by TVNZ from the 1980s until the late 2000s. The Betacam material in the TVNZ Archive includes television programmes such as Radio with Pictures, Country Calendar, Tagata Pasifika, Back Benches and What Now. It also includes documentaries, news footage, music videos and coverage of sporting events such as the Olympic Games and Rugby World Cup tournaments.
27. The collection is at high risk of being lost because Betacam equipment is no longer manufactured and Sony (the format owner) will not be providing technical or service support after 2023. This is a global issue and it is estimated that only 30 per cent of Betacam content worldwide will be saved.
28. Despite being housed in climate-controlled vaults, the tapes will naturally degrade over time. In the opinion of expert archivists, the tapes must be digitised within the next five to eight years or the content on them will be lost. Ngā Taonga's ability to access suitable equipment (in competition with other archives, television stations and production companies) will have the greatest effect on this timeline.
29. The cost, size and urgency of this digitisation work means that Ngā Taonga cannot afford to carry it out within its baseline funding.

Betacam collection: the proposal

30. Ngā Taonga has conducted a feasibility study and determined that the most effective and cost-efficient method of digitising the collection would be to outsource much of the work to an international supplier with specialised automated processes. The content stored on the Betacam tape collection would be copied to a duplicated digital file format, meaning that nationally-important news, documentaries, much-loved television shows and significant taonga Māori would be saved for both current users and future generations.

Opportunities for collaboration

32. With sufficient and sustainable funding, there are opportunities for Ngā Taonga's collections to be stored and preserved in accordance with international standards, and to become more accessible onsite in Wellington or in regional hub facilities, as well as online.
33. Ngā Taonga can also benefit from collaboration with other organisations to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities. These organisations could include:
- a) other archival and library institutions, such as Archives New Zealand (Archives) and the National Library of New Zealand (the National Library);
 - b) other heritage organisations, such as Te Papa and Heritage New Zealand; and
 - c) other broadcasting and screen sector organisations, such as the New Zealand Film Commission and New Zealand On Air.
34. It is worth noting that the other two organisations that are part of the NALI Ministerial Group's work plan, Archives and the National Library, also have audiovisual collections that present storage and preservation challenges that are shared by Ngā Taonga. The Ministerial Group could consider opportunities to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness of archival efforts across the audiovisual collections of Ngā Taonga, Archives and National Library.
35. Paper 2 for the 25 June 2018 NALI Ministerial Group meeting discusses the possibility of Ngā Taonga sharing the new facilities proposed as part of the Department of Internal Affairs' Preserving the Nation's Memory business case. It should be noted, however, that the option of including Ngā Taonga in this proposal has not yet been investigated, and the proposal's timeframes mean that it would not solve Ngā Taonga's immediate property needs.
36. Collaboration could be pursued in relation to each of the challenges identified above:
- a) **Property.** Ngā Taonga might be able to share space with other organisations, including repository space for collection storage, back-of-house facilities for technical work such as conservation and digitisation, or spaces for public access to and engagement with collections.
 - b) **Access.** Ngā Taonga seeks to make its own collection more accessible and searchable online, and this aim could be extended to create digital archival infrastructure for the broader screen sector (allowing, for example, film makers or broadcasters to archive material in real time). As Ngā Taonga's collection becomes increasingly digitised, it could also be linked to other digitised collections in the wider archival and heritage sectors.
 - c) **Preservation.** As noted above, Archives and the National Library also have audiovisual collections, as do other institutions (for example, Te Papa). Such

materials require specialised preservation expertise and equipment, which could be shared between organisations.

37. Some collaboration can occur within existing baselines, while more ambitious projects (such as shared digital infrastructure) would require new funding.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982