

Getting to know you...

Regular feature profiling
New Zealand's archive
community

Cellia Joe



Waiho i te toipoto, kua i te toiroa

Who are you and where are you based?

Kia ora. I work in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. The title of my role is Heritage Advice Coordinator for the Outreach Services team. Within the sector, I am the Tumuaki | President of Te Rōpū Whakahau <https://trw.org.nz/> and also Secretary of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Indigenous Matters Section <https://www.ifla.org/indigenous-matters>

Can you tell us about how you found yourself in this/these roles?

I didn't enter the Information profession intentionally. In the early 2000's my iwi, Ngāti Kahungunu, co-managed a large exhibition called Kahungunu, ka moe ... ka puta ... that was shown in the National Library Gallery. After working in Wellington for the iwi, a job opportunity came up in the National Library. I applied, got the job, and I'm still here.

As for Te Rōpū Whakahau, after enjoying the professional, collegial and cultural support of the rōpū over the years, I decided to give back through Ngā Kaiwhakahau the associations' National Council. Through a twist of fate, I volunteered for a supporting position on council, and found myself voted as incoming Tumuaki. That is also what happened for the IFLA Indigenous Matters section.

What is your biggest challenge right now?

For Te Rōpū Whakahau, our biggest challenge is nurturing our members, 'he tangata'. All work within Te Rōpū Whakahau are voluntary, so finding a work, life, cultural obligation balance is also a big challenge for Ngā Kaiwhakahau. I think there is a large community of Māori people out there who because of who they are (genealogically / whakapapa) their education and skill base (e.g. Māori language speakers) find their cultural obligations and expectation that come with being Māori affect this balance.

What is your biggest opportunity?

One of two big positives I see is the opportunity for Te Rōpū Whakahau to be more inclusive and resilient. Just recently we changed our adage from 'Te Rōpū Whakahau, Māori in libraries and information management' to 'Te Rōpū Whakahau is the leading national body that represents Māori engaged in Libraries, Culture, Knowledge, Information, Communication and Systems Technology in Aotearoa New Zealand.'¹ This allows us to gather in Māori practitioners and their organisations to empower whānau, hapū and iwi by providing development opportunities, indigenous and multicultural partnerships, and championing best practice around services, cultural responsiveness and accountability within the profession.

The other big opportunity is within IFLA. Te Rōpū Whakahau is an active member of the IFLA Indigenous Matters section, and has been a member of IFLA since 2012. The section began as a Special Interest Group and became a section in January 2016 under the Chairpersonship of past Tumuaki Te Paea Taiuru.

What is your highest priority for Te Rōpū Whakahau during your term as Tumuaki?

At this moment, my highest priority can be summarized in the following whakataukī "He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata" What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people. As an association we need to ensure that we provide Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga, Kaitiakitanga and Te Reo Māori, in line with our values. When the focus is on membership, we are embodying our vision, which is 'waiho i te toipoto, kau i te toiroa' which roughly translates as let us keep close together, not far apart.

Can you tell us about a recent notable event or experience you'd like to highlight to ARANZ members?

Earlier this year, I attended the International Indigenous Librarians Forum (IILF) in Sydney Australia. IILF arose from a network of indigenous library professionals from Māori, First Nations, Aboriginals, Saami, and Native Americans that recognised and acknowledged the indigenous viewpoints within the profession. The first forum was held in Auckland, hosted by Te Rōpū Whakahau in 1999, with successive fora in Sweden, North America, Canada, Australia and Aotearoa.

IILF is held every two years for the purpose of providing a “focused exploration of the significant issues facing libraries and institutions that care for indigenous and cultural information”.² It allows a meeting place for indigenous librarians and information management workers to discuss, debate and describe their experience of working within the industry and their visions, hopes and expectations for the future.

Planning is underway for 20 years of IILF. It will be hosted in Auckland at Waipapa Marae 7 – 10 February 2019.

How can *Archifacts* readers get involved or support the work of Te Rōpū Whakahau?

Te Rōpū Whakahau is a Māori association here to support Māori working in the sector. As an association we are keen to bring on-board new members interested in actively influencing and making a positive change in the sector. For those who work in public archives and those who are Archivists for their iwi, Te Rōpū Whakahau offers a network of support based on Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga, and Kaitiakitanga. Joining Te Rōpū Whakahau is as simple as going online to our website <https://trw.org.nz/contact/join/> Waiho i te toipoto, kua i te toiroa.

Endnotes

1. <https://trw.org.nz/about-us/>
2. International Indigenous Librarians' Forum Proceedings, Te Rōpū Whakahau, 2001.