

ARANZ at Forty

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‘Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua’

My past is my present is my future

I walk backwards into the future

with my eyes fixed on my past

Shannon has invited me to touch on the direction that ARANZ would like to head in over the coming decade. Before doing so and in the spirit of the ARANZ40 Symposium in August here is a brief recap of our genesis:

As many of you will know, in October 1976 ARANZ was established as an incorporated society, formed out of the Archives Committee of the New Zealand Library Association. The stated aim of ARANZ then, as now being: to promote the understanding and importance of records and archives in New Zealand. Two years prior to forming as a national body, the Archives Committee had already assumed responsibility for the publication of Archifacts. The first issue appeared in April 1974 under the editorship of Stuart Strachan, with the stated aim to provide a regular and formal link between New Zealand archivists, manuscript librarians and other interested persons by facilitating the free exchange of information concerning archives and manuscripts in this country.

Since then the information and technical landscape of our profession has changed in ways that we couldn't imagine in the 1970s. At library school in 1976 I recall that microfilm was the latest thing and the worldwide web was of course yet to be invented. Despite this, the inter-related purposes of ARANZ and the Archifacts journal remain as relevant today as back then. That is, to ensure best professional standards and practice in maintaining archives and records and to understand the value of archives and records in maintenance of a free and equitable society.

What then is the Future Direction of ARANZ?

This extract from the joint ARANZ/ASA conference committee in 2014 perhaps best sums up our immediate and future challenges as an organisation: *The continued success and relevance of our profession requires us to renegotiate and reinvent our relationships in a changing profession; to make connections across professional and sector boundaries; to connect*

with the range of communities and users who need and use the records for which we are responsible and whose activities require documentation; and to connect with those who require our skills to support government and organisational commitments to good governance.

In the digital era it might be said that everyone is an archivist – social media and google allow each of us to archive and create our own histories. This huge profusion of information and revolution in forms of access make the need for professional and critical archival practice and recordkeeping all the more vital.

Forty is an age when individuals fear middle age spread. As an organisation ARANZ continues to thrive. It does require the continued involvement of its members; it welcomes new questions and acknowledges the dedication of those such as Stuart Strachan who were inspired to found the organisation all those years ago.