

19 November 2010

Media Release - for immediate release

## Archives Central brings regions past into the future

Archives Central is a first for New Zealand - bringing the wealth of historically significant information stored in local authorities archives into the digital age, making it accessible to everyone, no matter where they are in the world.

The Archives Central Project, being undertaken by Manawatu Wanganui Local Authority Shared Services Ltd (MW-LASS), brings together the archives of five of the councils in the Horizons Region (Manawatu, Horowhenua, Tararua, Rangitikei and Horizons) into one central location, the Archives Central Repository.

A user-friendly online database has been specially created to catalogue the archives within the repository, and also includes the archives of Wanganui District Council and Palmerston North City Council. The database will enable quick and comprehensive searches to be performed on the archives, and when a user finds what they are looking for a simple process gets that item brought out of the repository for viewing.

“This is the first time in New Zealand that individual local authorities have got together to see how they can improve the way they manage and provide access to their historical records” says MW-LASS Executive Officer Craig Grant.

“Archives Central is focused on two main outcomes. It started as a shared service between seven councils within the Horizons region, to meet the requirements of the Public Records Act. And with this goal in mind it is working out perfectly, creating a more efficient and cost effective system. But it is the second goal, to bring our regions rich history to life making it more accessible to all, enabling professional historians, genealogists, teachers and weekend researchers to quickly and easily find out what treasures the council’s combined archives contain, that I find really inspiring.

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By creating Archives Central, and the user friendly processes that support it, I hope that more of our school children will be encouraged to research into their history, that individuals will find out where they have come from and the journey their ancestors took, and that historians will be able to make more detailed and accurate connections between our region's past and how it has affected the subjects they are researching."

On the 7 December 2010 at the Coach House Museum in Feilding the Hon Nathan Guy, Minister responsible for Archives New Zealand, will officially launch the project and switch on the Archives Central database, which will already contain the archives of Wanganui District Council and Palmerston North City Council.

Over the next 16 months the majority of the other five Council's pre 1989 archives will be added to the database and once the building work is completed they will be moved into the repository. Following that the project will work on identifying other archives held by each council, including those in a digital format. Longer term the project is planning to digitise many of the archives so they may be accessed online.

This project has national significance. It is the first of its kind and will act as example for similar projects across New Zealand to follow.

Regionally the project has many strong messages for rate payers and residents. It shows proactive, co-operative working between councils, increases efficiency and demonstrates that the councils within the Horizons region are undertaking projects that have a national significance.

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**Media Event:**

What: The official launch of Archives Central and the switching on of the online database  
When: Tuesday 7 December 2010. 4.30pm  
Where: The Coach House Museum, 40 Bowen Street, Feilding  
Who: Hon Nathan Guy MP, Craig Grant, MW-LASS Executive Officer, Manawatu District Mayor Ian McKelvie and invited dignitaries

For further information please contact Paul Jennings  
e: paul@drycrust.com, Ph. 03 544 4795