

[From Anna Whitehead, Archives New Zealand]

This is a call for expressions of interest in a one-day seminar on environmental management of documentary heritage to be held on Thursday 25th September 2025 in Wellington. The cost would be \$150 per participant.

Below is the detailed information about the course, which is also relevant to architects, building engineers and technicians, as well as facilities managers, so please also circulate amongst these contacts.

Overturning a lifetime of misunderstanding – making the move towards passive climate storage of archive and library collections, by Chris Woods (see bio below)

A major risk to archival collections is the environment in which they are stored. Understanding how archives interact with the climate inside a store, what environments are safe for archival materials (including in reading rooms and displays) and which provide a sustainable and affordable means of conserving collections, are key issues for conservators, librarians and archivists hoping to ensure the long-term conservation of collections. In recent times there has been a 'sea-change' in what we understand about the materials in archives, leading to a major shift in direction from tightly managed environments, using computer-controlled mechanical equipment, towards passive climate storage. This in-person day course aims to help professionals understand how and why the sector has relied on engineering solutions hitherto, why these fail and do not provide what archival and library materials need and what we can do to change from wasteful, damaging and carbon-emitting methods towards sustainable and protective storage.

The course will be split into two halves.

The morning session will examine:

- The standard guidance that developed in the 1970s and why it did not reflect the reality of archival and library materials and their needs
- how typical condensing air handling and air conditioning systems operate and why they cannot provide a safe environment for collections
- how archive and books interact with storage climates
- the significance of monitoring humidity and temperature appropriately in stores and what monitoring data can tell us.

The afternoon session will cover:

- how and why passive climate storage works and can protect collections and provide more stable and sustainable conditions than mechanically controlled environments
- the different approaches to building design and construction that are needed in contrast to previous approaches
- what forms of back-up control may be needed and why they can be used intermittently and safely
- how to test the environmental strengths and weaknesses of an existing store and whether it is suitable for passive climate storage
- what improvements may be needed to achieve a safe passive environment in existing stores
- the relationship between fire protection design and the storage environment
- how to define whether architects, engineers and builders have provided storage buildings that meet standards and the needs of collections, including handover processes and managing climate in the first years of a new store.

The session will refer to a range of conservation science research over the last 30 years and to the current standards BS 4971:2017 *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*, BS EN 16893:2018 *Specifications for buildings intended for heritage collections* and ISO 11799:2024

Document storage requirements for archive and library materials. It will use a range of positive and negative case studies of archive and library buildings in the UK in order to illustrate errors and successes.

The trainer Chris Woods is the current Director of the National Conservation Service, a UK based non-profit membership organisation for archives, libraries and museums without conservation staff, see www.ncs.org.uk. He is also chair of the British Standards Institution's committee responsible for BS 4971, having led its review and drafting of the current, 2017 iteration, and was convenor of the working group responsible for drafting EN 16893:2018.

Please get in touch with Vesna Živković at vesna.zivkovic@dia.govt.nz or Anna Whitehead at anna.whitehead@dia.govt.nz as soon as possible, so we can gauge interest and arrange a suitably-sized venue.

Please note: this is the same seminar/workshop that Chris will be giving at Bind25 in Auckland a week earlier.