

# Letter to Chief Archivist

The Chief Archivist Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te  
Kāwanatanga

2-12 Aitken Street

Thorndon Wellington 6011

8 September 2025

Tēnā koe Anahera,

I am writing on behalf of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ) to raise concerns about the extended timeframes Public Offices are experiencing in the review and authorisation of new disposal authorities.

ARANZ members have reported delays of up to two years or more following submission, with little or no feedback from Archives New Zealand. In some cases, the staff who prepared the draft authority have since left the organisation, making it more difficult and costly to respond to recommendations. Meanwhile, records ready for disposal remain in limbo, increasing both risk and costs for Public Offices.

We understand that response times have lengthened in recent years.

This raises concerns about whether Archives New Zealand is sufficiently resourced or whether this function is being appropriately prioritised.

Effective public sector recordkeeping is essential to accountable government and the delivery of public services. Archives New Zealand, and the Chief Archivist, play a critical role in supporting this across the sector. Any reduction in service or support undermines this role and poses a broader risk to transparency and efficiency in government.

As a civil society organisation committed to promoting sound recordkeeping, ARANZ feels compelled to raise these concerns. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss potential solutions and explore ways to improve the timeliness of disposal authority reviews.

Ngā manaakitanga

Richard Foy

ARANZ President

Reply to above letter:

17 Whiringa-ā-rangi 2025

E te rangatira e Richard, tēnā koe

He mihi tēnei ki a koe, ki a koutou o te ohu nei, hei āwhina ngā mema kei raro i te āhuatanga o ngā whare taonga, ka mihi.

Disposal Authorities

Thank you for your letter raising concerns regarding the timeframes experienced by Public Offices in the review and authorisation of disposal authorities. Please be assured that I take my position as the regulator of government recordkeeping seriously, and the disposal function remains a priority for me as Poumanaaki Chief Archivist.

As you and your membership may be aware, in recent times the ongoing management and progression of new draft Disposal Authorities has been impacted by resource constraints and competing priorities. At the forefront of these have been a number of high priority responsibilities that have required support, including but not limited to the preparation for

the transfer of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care digital records, and supporting the Crown Response to Care Records. Key staff have been redeployed to resource these critical tasks which has impacted the resource available to our disposal function.

We remain committed to supporting the disposal function and have instituted a queuing system, so that the draft authorities submitted for review can be prioritised according to need, risk, and agency dependencies. The disposal queue maintains a consistent level of targeted support for Disposal Authority development. The length of time spent in the queue is one of several factors taken into consideration.

As we have now received targeted funding to support the Crown Response to the management of care records across government, we expect to speed up work on Disposal Authority reviews later this financial year if staff resource becomes available, subject to funding being prioritised. We will keep ARANZ and the wider sector updated on this mahi.

As you will be aware, we have recently transitioned into a new collaborative operational structure for Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga (Te Rua Mahara) and the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa. I believe this structure will better meet the needs of the public, with improved resource usage through shared services to enable accessibility to the taonga we care for on behalf of the country.

Once again, thank you for raising your concerns with me. I look forward to meeting with you in the future to further understand how Te Rua

Mahara can support and enable successful information management in the sector.

Kia kaha tonu tātou, ā, kia ū ki te tika me te pono. Ehara i te toa takitahi, erangi he toa takimano. Kia ora mai rā.

Nāku iti noa, nā

Anahera Morehu

Poumanaaki Chief Archivist