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“JACKS OF ALL TRADES”

**The Role Of Exhibition Officers In Regional Museums:
Four Case Studies from the Lower North Island, New Zealand.**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts (Social Sciences) in Museum Studies
at Massey University**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to explore the roles of Exhibition Officers who work in regional museums in New Zealand. Research comprised interviews with the Exhibition Officers, Directors and Curators (or equivalent) of four institutions, and an examination of institutional documents, including job descriptions, salary scales and annual reports.

The roles of Exhibition Officers include the design, fabrication and installation of exhibitions; the design of publicity material and some functions traditionally regarded as "curatorial". The variety of roles is partly due to institutional requirements of these positions and partly because of the wide range of skills which Exhibition Officers bring from previous training and experience. The extent of the curatorial functions performed by Exhibition Officers depends on the boundaries of the Curators roles in each institution. Two of the participant Exhibition Officers had a major role in the curation of exhibitions. The flexibility of roles in some institutions makes it imperative that there is a mutual understanding of each other's roles by Exhibition Officer and Curator.

A discussion of the status of Exhibition Officers in their own institutions and among the wider body of museums was important to the discussion of their roles. While Directors spoke of the high esteem in which they held their Exhibition Officers, in most instances this was not matched by awarding them with a salary that equated with other high status positions such as the institutions' Curators. Where status may affect the performance of the Exhibition Officer is in resource allocation. It is clear that in comparison to curatorial functions, the exhibitions function in some of the case study museums has a low priority in the allocation of staff resources. It is likely that the lack of recognised qualifications held by Exhibition Officers constrains their status among the wider body of museum workers. This is hindered by the fact that there is currently very little appropriate training for Exhibition Officers.

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The informality of communication and exhibition planning documented in this study is at odds with the formalised and prescriptive approaches to be found in museological texts. There is a need for the development of literature on museum practice derived from ethnographic studies in New Zealand museums and museums of similar size and function in other countries. This will provide practitioners and students with a more accurate representation of issues and practices in museums than some museological texts drawn from the larger institutions overseas.

A discussion of exhibition planning in the participant museums showed that the inter-relationship between museums and the public needs to be enhanced by making exhibitions more visitor-focused. This may be achieved by instituting formal evaluation of exhibitions and focus group research. It was apparent that there was little critical feedback from the public on museum exhibitions. This makes it difficult for Exhibition Officers to ascertain if exhibitions are meeting goals, or if exhibitions are being provided that the public wish to see.

This thesis supports the contention that to understand the workings of museums, more research on the roles of museum staff and museum practice must be carried out.

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PREFACE

I can always remember being fascinated by exhibitions in museums. In later years, through my working life and university courses, I developed an interest in the study of "work". This thesis gave me scope to combine these interests and ask "Who are the people who make exhibitions and what do they do?"

Margaret Cranwell, the Exhibitions Officer of Hawke's Bay suggested that a comparative study of the full range of functions carried out by Exhibition Officers in a number of museums would be interesting for her and other Exhibition Officers. She described the core of her duties as the design, fabrication and installation of exhibitions and wondered what duties were performed by Exhibition Officers in other museums. She also believed a study of this nature would be of use to those entering the workforce in gaining an idea of the range of duties encompassed by this occupational group. I decided to follow her suggestion, hence the subtitle of the thesis.

When looking at a listing of New Zealand Museums that contained names of staff and their positions, I noticed that the position of Exhibition Officer is common to a number of institutions, including museums of art, history and anthropology. Many of these were the generalist provincial museums, designated as "regional museums".

Having been a volunteer at two regional museums, Hawke's Bay Museum and The Science Centre and Manawatu Museum, I had some familiarity with and an admiration for the work of their Exhibition Officers. This positive pre-disposition was a factor in the decision to undertake research into the work of Exhibition Officers. However, from personal observation and a review of the literature, I also sensed that exhibition staff are sometimes accorded lower status in museums than other "professional" museum staff. The status of Exhibition Officers was therefore included in the inquiry.

The influences that affected the design of the research and the style of representation, stem from my background in Social Anthropology, especially in the attempt to represent the perceptions and experiences of those who participated in the research. However, I am also pragmatic and have no strict allegiance to one method or paradigm (Bryman, 1990:89-90; Patton, 1990:186-189). I have therefore combined some quantitative elements with the largely qualitative approach used in this research project.

Social Anthropology and Museum Studies stress an ethical approach to conducting research. I was most concerned that this approach be built into this research and made strenuous efforts to do so.

While this research takes an anthropological approach, I have attempted to address museological issues in this thesis, which I feel need documentation and discussion.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Regional museums in New Zealand perform many functions, including the preservation of historical, artistic and cultural heritage, exhibitions, public programmes and research. However, the experience that most of the public have of museums is provided by exhibitions. Thus it is the quality of exhibitions created by museum staff, including Exhibition Officers, that help shape the public's perception of museums.

There is little documentation of the work of exhibitions staff. While British and North American museological literature provides some discussion of the functions of these staff, there is virtually no discussion of the role of exhibitions staff in New Zealand or Australian museological literature.

The aim of this thesis is to initiate research and discussion on the nature of the work of Exhibition Officers by exploring the role (or roles) of four staff whose positions are designated "Exhibition Officer" or "Exhibitions Officer" (which collectively I refer to as "Exhibition Officer") who work in regional museums in New Zealand. The investigation examines the institutional requirements of this position, the ways in which Exhibition Officers and other staff perceive the role of Exhibition Officers, the implementation of these roles (through a discussion of the processes used in exhibition planning), and how these roles compare with one another. This study highlights the importance of researching museum practice and in particular that of New Zealand museums

A knowledge of museum practice is an essential prerequisite to a discussion of the existence or otherwise of a "museum profession". The "professional" status of museum practitioners is much-debated. The combination of manual, technical, and curatorial functions identified in

the work of Exhibition Officers in this study makes the issue of their professional status more problematic than staff with specialist roles, (such as Curators in large institutions whose responsibilities are clearly identified with an academic discipline).

The meaning of the term "role" used in this study is that of the "usual function" of Exhibition Officers. Through the presentation of the case studies, the thesis documents the "role" of four Exhibition Officers employed in regional museums in New Zealand.

Those museums that describe themselves as "regional museums" are those that serve an area wider than their town, city or district, often acting as the supporting agent for the smaller museums in their region. While regional museums employ Exhibition Officers or other generalist exhibitions staff, most smaller local museums do not. Interestingly, many provincial art galleries, which were outside the scope of this study, also employ Exhibition Officers (Cairns, 1994). The exhibitions staff of larger metropolitan museums are more specialised again, and employ staff with job titles such as Exhibitions Designer and Exhibitions Technician.

The regional museums of the lower North Island (Hawke's Bay Museum, Taranaki Museum, Whanganui Regional Museum, and Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre) were found to be comparable in terms of staff numbers and types of exhibitions. These institutions each employ approximately ten professional staff with a range of exhibitions that include history, ethnography, taonga Maori, art, and natural history. I sought and received approval to conduct research into the role of the Exhibition Officer in each of these institutions.

Case studies are based on research conducted in the four museums mentioned above. Qualitative case study research methods, including qualitative interviews, elicited information on the roles of Exhibition Officers from the points of view of a number of museum professionals. The case studies aim to represent the views of the research participants in as accurate and balanced a manner as possible.

The Thesis consists of six Chapters. Chapter Two presents a discussion of museological and other literature relevant to the thesis topic. It highlights the lack of literature of direct relevance to the topic. Chapter Three presents a discussion of methodology used in the research project. It clearly documents the rationale behind the choice of qualitative case study methodology, and discusses the design and implementation of the research strategies. Chapter Four presents four case studies which draw on the interviews and other research conducted in the participant institutions. Chapter Five presents a comparative discussion of the case studies. Chapter Six presents the findings of the thesis, and makes recommendations for future action and areas for further investigation.

Readers of this thesis should remember that the specific circumstances described in each institution reflect the time when research was undertaken in 1994 and do not necessarily reflect circumstances of an earlier or later date. Although the case studies are based in generalist regional museums, the findings of the study raise issues that are pertinent to the role of exhibitions staff in other heritage institutions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of museological and other relevant literature used to develop an understanding of contemporary theory and practice in areas related to the thesis topic.

Museums as Organisations

“Organisational” literature is reviewed for its ability to provide information on the organisational aspects of the context in which Exhibition Officers work.

Museums are organisations. They employ staff, including Exhibition Officers, to achieve their mission. In examining the context in which Exhibition Officers work, it is important to understand the nature of organisations in general and museums in particular.

“Museums like all organisations, have both a formal organisational structure and an informal workplace culture.” (Moore, 1994:10).

Structuring organisations is important in defining roles and responsibilities. Often the formal structure is expressed in an organisation chart (Thomson and Thomson, 1989:72). Organisation charts show lines of control and formal channels of communication. However, while showing job titles they do not show job descriptions, informal lines of communication, levels of power wielded by individual staff or other dynamics within the organisation (Thomson and Thomson, 1989:73). An examination of formal structures cannot account for the total functioning of an organisation nor the roles of staff.

When investigating systems and processes in museums and other organisations, it is important to understand the role of organisational culture referred to by Moore (1994:10).

Tweed (1989:78) describes organisational culture as:

“...the unique, collective set of beliefs and values which guide action...These beliefs form a backdrop to everyday actions and are manifest in particular behaviours.”

It is organisational culture that underlies ways in which “things are done” in organisations, both within and outside the formal structure of an organisation. In the museums chosen for the case studies, organisational culture may influence levels of formality in planning exhibitions, or the way in which Exhibition Officers interact with other staff of their particular museum. These factors will, to some extent, shape the role of Exhibition Officers.

Organisational cultures are not static. A major change is the employment of specialists other than Curators:

“In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, education officers, and designers were employed in addition to curators. These professionals improved the experience of the museum for those who happened to visit.” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 211-214).

This change in staff structures, has implications for staff relations. Decades ago Curators were often the sole paid staff of a museum, who among other things made decisions about the content and design of exhibitions. With the employment of specialist designers and other exhibitions staff, these newer staff positions may have a role in making decisions about the content and design of exhibitions.

In looking at museums as organisations, it is also important to consider the experience staff have of museums as a workplace. Kahn and Garden (1994:206) report from interviews conducted in British museums that half of their respondents liked the creative aspects of their jobs, while one quarter, reported enjoying working with people in the same field. Dislikes included the organisational structure, administration, meetings, planning and workload. Kahn and Garden (1994:202) also report a great deal of dissatisfaction among museum workers

(based on a survey they carried out in addition to the interviews). The survey highlights “lack of consultation and feedback” followed closely by “conflicting tasks and demands” as the major sources of dissatisfaction. These responses may reflect a dissatisfaction with management practice.

The “Museum Profession”

Over the last few decades, a great deal of energy has been expended debating the existence of a “museum profession”.

Teather (1978:173) outlines some general criteria for professional status: a recognition of common aims; a tradition of knowledge and expertise of the occupation; formal academic training and/or apprenticeship to ensure mastery of traditions necessary to the occupation; institutionalized modes for ensuring competency of the profession; including a code of ethics; a professional association with the power to discipline members; exclusive jurisdiction over applications of knowledge and expertise; and public validation of the right to sole jurisdiction. The “museum profession” has few of these attributes.

There are a number of advocates who argue either for or against the existence of a “museum profession”. Alexander (1979:233) argues that while museum workers are members of many different professions, they are also members of the wider museum profession:

“The paramount essence of the museum profession is a common cause and goals”.
(Alexander, 1979:233).

Parr (1964:289) disputes this, and highlights, instead, the plurality of professions among museum workers. He firmly rejects any movement towards the formation of a single museum profession:

“The best way to promote the welfare and progress of museums, and those who work for them, is by not attempting to homogenize our careers and force us all into the mould of a single profession. Our common interests do not spring from our highly diversified tasks and qualifications, but from the cause and goals we work for.” (Parr, 1964:294).

While noting the movement towards defining a museum profession, Van Mensch (1989:19-20) believes that it is museology as a discipline that may provide the integration of the specialist disciplines of the museum:

“so that we will refer to the profession of museology rather than the museum profession”.

While it is not crucial that the existence of a “museum profession” be recognised by the public, it is crucial that exhibitions staff are not left behind in the “professionalisation” of the museum workforce. Qualifications and training are therefore crucial to the recognition of exhibition staff as “professionals”. A higher status for exhibitions staff is important to more equitable decision-making and salary levels, and the sharing of resources in museums. The case studies, therefore, address the status of the participant Exhibition Officers within their own museum.

The Role of Exhibition Officers

In the Introduction, the term “role” was defined as “function.” It is also important to look more closely at the concept of “role”. Handy (1976:52) provides a useful introduction to role theory as applied to organisations:

“Role theory, the study of the individual and his roles, will...help us understand...why organisations breed misunderstandings and conflict. It will provide some way of linking theories about individuals to theories about organisations.”

Organisational requirements do not fully account for staff roles. Handy (1976:55) explains that an individual's role is defined by the expectations of those with whom the individual interacts, "what he calls role expectation". (Handy, 1976:55). I would also argue that individuals in the workplace also shape and extend their own roles to suit their own skill and interests. To explore the roles of Exhibition Officers, it is important to examine the similarities and differences between "role descriptions" documented by written job descriptions, and descriptions and expectations of roles expressed by Exhibition Officers and those with whom they work.

Role theory can bring to bear a framework for the examination of the role of Exhibition Officers as individuals, how the incumbents define and fulfil that role in their own way, and how it is defined by the organisation and other staff through "role expectations" (Handy, 1976:55).

Preliminary inquires established a link between exhibition design and the work of Exhibition Officers. Literature on the role of exhibition designers adds to a discussion on the role of Exhibition Officers. Velarde (1992:663-664) stresses that the designer's job is to translate the curator's message into a form intelligible for the ordinary visitor. Hall (1987:23-24) highlights the importance of the relationship between the designer and curator, and the need for balance between the subject specialist and the designer. The designer must be able to translate his or her understanding of the curator's ideas into a communication strategy for an exhibition. Such a strategy must comprise three-dimensional and graphic design, as well as written interpretation, appropriate for the target audience. It must also take into account the practical constraints of physical installation and production of exhibitions that must be carried out by the exhibitions staff.

Hall (1987:23-24) also shows that to understand the role of the Exhibition Officer, the relationship between that position and the Curator also requires investigation. The case studies will be an ideal vehicle for such an investigation, and will show the interaction of the roles of these two positions.

Velarde (1988:39-47) outlines the following qualities required to fulfil the role of the designer: an understanding of three-dimensional space; an understanding of people; a basic understanding of engineering structure; theatrical flair; problem solving ability; an intelligent interest in the subject being exhibited; communication skills; interpretive skills; interior design skills; graphic arts skills; writing skills; knowledge of lighting; drawing skills; model making ability... the list goes on. As Velarde (1988:40) says:

"...the exhibition designer is a jack of all trades".

Literature which describes the roles of members of exhibition "teams" in larger museums also adds to the discussion of the role of Exhibition Officers who work in smaller regional museums. For the design, production and maintenance of exhibitions, Belcher (1991:78-79) lists the following staff: designer (exhibitions), designer (graphics), production staff and maintenance staff. These roles encompass a wide range of functions and skills, including two-dimensional and three-dimensional design, writing, administration, construction, and maintenance. The roles encompassed by the above staff may have to be undertaken by one staff member in New Zealand's regional museums: the Exhibition Officer.

The Curator's Role

The previous discussion on designers stressed their relationship with the Curator. It is important to discuss the role of the latter position. The traditional role of the Curator was often as the director and sometimes the only paid employee of a museum. The emphasis was on scholarship (as a specialist in his or her particular field of expertise), supervising students on training courses, responsibility for the collections (collecting and care of the collection), and the organisation of exhibitions (including content, interpretation, catalogues and promotional materials) (Van Mensch, 1989:24-25; Danilov, 1994:52-53). The increasing specialisation of staff in museums has meant that other staff have taken over traditional curatorial roles (Van Mensch, 1989:25).

In a discussion of staff roles in exhibition teams, Belcher (1991:78) describes the role of the curator in a museum with a number of specialist staff:

"To provide specialist information on the subject matter and undertake any research necessary. To be the major contributor to the brief. To identify, locate, select and if necessary negotiate the acquisition and /or loan of material. Prepare lists of exhibits and information. Provide draft copy for labels, references for illustrations, etc. Possibly write the catalogue. Above all, to be enthusiastic about his/her subject, and understanding of the designer's role." (Belcher, 1991:78).

The case studies will show how the roles of Exhibition Officers and curators inter-relate in the planning and execution of their museums' exhibition programme.

Status

A discussion of "status" in organisations is useful in ascertaining where Exhibition Officers fit within the formal and informal structures of their organisation. Status may be defined as relative positioning within social systems (Wolf, 1985:825-826; Williams, 1983:299-301). Organisations are also described as social systems (Barnard as referred to by Thomson, 1989: 31).

There has been little previous documentation of the status of exhibitions staff in New Zealand museums. However, referring to the way she perceived exhibition staff are treated by Curators, Helen Telford, former Exhibitions Officer, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, stated:

"Museums make the distinction between curatorial and non-curatorial staff and this is a measure of relative status as curatorial staff are generally better paid."

(Telford, 1987:17).

This distinction, she explained, extended to some institutions where the terms “curatorial” and “non-curatorial” are equated with “professional” and “non-professional”. This impacts on pay scales which are often set using academic qualifications as their measure, so that highly experienced but academically unqualified exhibitions staff remain on lower rates of pay than curatorial staff (Telford, 1989:17).

Bedno (1991:54) described the status of museum designers:

"Many museums function as extensions of academia, and museum staff people with advanced university degrees often find it difficult to regard academically underqualified members of the design department as functional equals."

Peter Ireland, Exhibitions Officer of the National Library Gallery, Wellington, also provides some insight into Exhibition Officers' perceptions of their place in the “museum profession”. Ireland (1986:25) was quite clear that the purpose of forming an association of Exhibition Officers was to raise their “*political voice and status*”.

“Exhibition News”, a newsletter for exhibitions staff states as one of its purposes “*raising the role and importance of Exhibition Officers and Display staff*”. (Cairns, 1994a:1). While practical issues, such as training and networking are important aims of the newsletter, it is also obvious that there is some perception among exhibitions staff that the importance of their work needs to be highlighted and their status improved.

If the status of Exhibition Officers is lower than that of other staff in their institutions, this has serious implications for resource allocation, decision-making processes and the setting of salary levels.

Training

Previous discussions made qualifications and training central to the recognition of Exhibition Officers as "museum professionals". The enhancement of practical skills is also important.

A review of museum training literature indicates the range of training available to Exhibition Officers, and highlight issues important in the development of their skills. The importance of training in exhibitions skills has been recognised by the International Council of Museums. Their training arm, the International Committee on the Training of Personnel includes topics specific to exhibitions work in a syllabus for the training of museum staff (ICTOP, 1980:25-30). Section 7, "Presentation: Exhibitions" (ICTOP, 1980:29) covers communication theory, principles of presentation, exhibition programming, design, roles of curator and designer, types of exhibitions, presentation of information and evaluation. Section 8, "The Public" (ICTOP, 1990:29-30) covers museums as public facilities, visitor behaviour, and methods of communicating with the public. The syllabus of the Reinwardt Academy, Faculty of Museology, Amsterdam College of Art also gives broad coverage to the skills required in exhibitions work (Boylan, 1989:77).

However, training in these skills is not widely available. Jane Bedno (1991,70:2) discussed the lack of professional training for museum exhibition designers in the U.S. She also noted a trend towards training in museums exhibition design components in design courses, describing a post graduate course in exhibition design which she hoped may make museums designers the "functional equals" of the museum academics (Bedno, 1991 53-55):

"The time has come for formal graduate university programs in museum exhibition design. Such programs would provide technical skills, exposure to current museum practice, an understanding of process, a knowledge of technology, and a balance between exposure to museum practice and study of alternate systems and approaches." (Bedno, 1991:55).

While training in museum studies is available in New Zealand, there is little integration between academic and technical skills. The Diploma and Masterate in Museum Studies at Massey University, have been structured so that new entrants into the museum workforce or intending entrants may gain a broad introductory knowledge of museum theory and practice. It is also structured so that longer-serving members of the museum workforce may substitute a core paper for a research project relevant to their own professional development or area of interest (Butts, 1992:26). However, some current Exhibition Officers are not academically qualified for post-graduate training of the type Bedno (1991) described, or the post-graduate course in Museum Studies offered in many countries (Edson, 1995). In New Zealand there is an urgent need for an undergraduate or polytechnic level Certificate in Museum Practice to cater for entry-level tertiary study in museology. There is also a need to integrate technical skills training in design and exhibition fabrication with museology.

In-service training is also very important. However, very few courses have been held in exhibition planning and design for exhibitions staff in New Zealand. The seminar "Designing Exhibitions for New Museums" held at The Science Centre and Manawatu Museum in 1994 is one of the few examples of this type of training. Cairns (1994:10, 1994a:10) lists a range of short courses available in New Zealand organised through the New Zealand Museums Liaison Service. Of these, the majority are workshops in the conservation of specialist collections. Exhibitions staff are attempting to rectify this shortfall in training opportunities. The 1995 Exhibitions Group of Aotearoa New Zealand seminar brought exhibitions staff together to discuss exhibition techniques and technology. One of the objectives was to develop a "*suitable training and professional organisation for exhibition and design staff.*" (Cairns, 1994a:8). As yet there is little evidence of a growth in training courses as result of this organisation.

Lack of available training can be a source of staff dissatisfaction. Kahn and Garden (1994:202) related that 43% of respondents to their survey of museum workers in the United Kingdom, reported inadequate or poor training for their jobs.

The training opportunities that are available to the Exhibition Officers who participated in the case studies will be discussed in the relevant sections of the case studies.

Exhibition Planning

A study of exhibition planning processes is relevant to an examination of how the implementation of Exhibition Officers' roles. A discussion of planning and decision-making processes, also facilitates an examination of the relationship between Exhibition Officers and Curators.

As a museological overview to the discussion, Belcher (1991) provides a range of information on the planning, implementation and evaluation of exhibitions based on museums in Britain. For Belcher an exhibition is the result of a co-operative effort:

"In order to fulfil its functions, a museum requires many skills to be brought together in its staff. The same applies to producing an exhibition, which, by its very nature, is a team or group activity where each member contributes his or her particular expertise, knowledge or talents to the benefit of the project. The concepts of a common goal and shared responsibility are important in teamwork, and help overcome the problems associated with jealousy, possessiveness and status." (Belcher, 1991:78).

Belcher (1991:78-79) lists those positions in a "medium-sized museum" which have a "significant contribution" to make to the production of an exhibition. The total number of positions mentioned exceeds the number of staff employed by any of the regional museums in this country. This alone makes it apparent that the role of Exhibition Officers in New Zealand's regional museums covers a wide range of functions.

Many exhibitions are planned by inter-disciplinary "exhibition teams". While including common ownership and input of various staff (e.g. Curator, Designer, Educator) at the concept stage of the exhibition as advantages, Gaiber (1984:21-23) points out that the team

approach can be cumbersome and time consuming. In addition, she writes, the team, will not function if one person such as the curator or designer reigns supreme (Gaiber, 1984:21-22). I must add that each member of the exhibition team must have a knowledge of and respect for each others roles so that disputes are minimised. It would also be fair to surmise that while formalised exhibition teams often result in an increase of staff resources in exhibition planning, they offer minimal assistance to the Exhibition Officer in the areas of design, fabrication and installation of exhibitions. The main advantage of exhibition teams, whether formally or informally constituted, is not the relief of the duties of the Exhibition Officer, but the co-ordination of staff and resources towards a common goal.

As staff other than the Exhibition Officer may be involved in the processes needed to develop and implement an exhibition, ways of communicating exhibition concepts and design solutions between staff are required. One method of communication is the exhibition brief. An exhibition brief is a formal document outlining the exhibition concept, objectives, design requirements, personnel and other resource requirements. Belcher (1991:83) stresses the importance of the brief to the success of the exhibition. In addition, the brief clarifies the exhibition problem and concentrates thought on the exact nature of the project. Hall (1987:42) writes:

"A brief is a starting point for the design process. It is the culmination of the first stage of work on an exhibition, the outcome of the dialogue between the curator and the designer, of the consideration, discussion and agreement between all the parties involved."

The brief may be written by the curator, or subject specialist, or it may be a collaborative effort (Belcher, 1991:84).

Typically, museological literature stresses the use of formal written briefs. However, the case studies will document some of the actual processes that are used in the communication of exhibition concepts, content and design in regional museums in New Zealand.

In addition to publications on exhibition planning, there are also a range of publications which address exhibition practice. These may best be categorised as practical manuals for the design and installation of exhibitions. They address issues as diverse as the design and construction of exhibition cases (Neal: 1976, 1987; Witteborg: 1991); techniques for visitor-operated exhibits in science museums (Kennedy 1990); multi-media technologies (Hoffos: 1992); label writing (Serrell: 1983) and exhibition lighting (Malotki et al.: undated). These publications show that Exhibition Officers not only require planning, design and interpretive skills, but a broad technical knowledge for the fabrication and installation of exhibitions.

Other skills may also be needed. The conservation of objects included in exhibitions is important to the longevity of the collections. Stolow (1987) addresses the theory and practice of conserving objects from storage to display. He makes it clear that exhibition practice must be conducted with the preservation of the exhibits as a priority. Exhibition Officers therefore require a knowledge of object handling and conservation-appropriate display techniques.

Studies by Wizevich (1992, 1993) identified some major issues which point to significant problems in exhibition planning, design and evaluation. Wizevich (1992:16-17) concluded that museum exhibition producers *"tend to design as if they, or people like them, are going to be the primary users."*

This creates a communication gap between producers and users. The ability of Exhibition Officers to design exhibitions for a non-specialist audience is enhanced when the formative evaluation process provides an understanding of target audience knowledge and perceptions of the topic of the exhibition. However, evaluation also has its pitfalls.

Wizevich (1993:228) explains:

"...In theory, evaluation is a democratic tool, allowing participation by the traditionally voiceless; in practice evaluation is structured by those in power, to assist them in meeting

their agendas...Visitors must be allowed to become active participants throughout the design process.” (Wizevich, 1993:228).

The Literature Review revealed very little documentation relating to the role of Exhibition Officers who work in regional museums in New Zealand. However, a discussion of the role of designers provided some insight into the role of Exhibition Officers: they must be multi-skilled “jacks of all trades.” The Literature Review makes it clear that to understand the role of Exhibition Officers, one must understand the organisational context in which Exhibition Officer’s work: there must be an investigation of the status of Exhibition Officers; the inter-relationship of the roles of Exhibition Officer and Curator must be explored and the processes by which exhibitions are organised must be investigated. In addressing the discussion on the professionalisation of museums staff, research must also address the training of Exhibition Officers.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Approaching the Investigation

The primary objective of this research project was to explore the roles of Exhibition Officers who work in Regional Museums. A secondary aim was to do so in a manner that represented the views of the research participants.

I sought an overall research strategy that was capable of incorporating qualitative interviews and supporting documentation, that would provide a system for research design and presentation, and that would allow the use of ethical approaches and procedures. Case studies based on qualitative methods were found to be able to meet these requirements.

The Case Study Choice

"...case studies are probably the most flexible of research designs." (Hakim, 1987:61).

Hakim (1987:61) explains that:

"Case studies take as their subject one or more selected examples of a social entity - such as communities, social groups, organisations...work teams, roles or relationships - that are studied using a variety of techniques."

Case studies also tend to be based on two or more methods of data collection (Hakim, 1987:63). This gives the flexibility to use both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Case studies may be replicated in different settings (Hakim, 1987:63). In this way generalisability may be built into the design of multiple case studies. However, the flexibility

of case studies may take into account the variations in each setting, so that the research is not reduced to a survey format. In this thesis, four case studies which share the same structure in research and presentation explore the roles of Exhibition Officers.

Cases Study Participants

For reasons of time and finance, a decision was made to limit the research to museums within the lower North Island. Thus, museums who employed Exhibition Officers, who were located in the lower North Island and whose exhibitions included ethnographic and historical representations were targeted as potential participants. These were: Hawke's Bay Museum, Napier; Taranaki Museum, New Plymouth; Whanganui Regional Museum, Wanganui; and Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre.

Research commenced in these institutions after consultations with the Exhibition Officers and with the formal approval of all Directors. Exhibition Officers were also asked to identify the staff with whom they worked closely on Exhibitions: in Hawke's Bay Museum and Whanganui Regional Museum this was the Curator of the institution; in Taranaki Museum, it was the Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director. In Gisborne Museum the majority of the exhibitions programme is curated by the Exhibitions Officer. However, the Curator of History co-ordinates this institution's small programme of historical exhibitions. He too was interviewed.

While other staff were targeted as possible participants, there were a number of reasons why it was not possible to include them in the study. At two of the institutions the Registrars were unavailable, in one the position was vacant. In the remainder the Registrar did not have a close working relationship with the Exhibition Officer. Therefore there was no feedback from staff in these positions. None of the Education Officers had any significant input into the general exhibition programme of any of the museums visited. Therefore they were not interviewed. However, in the one instance where the Exhibition Officer designed the content

of the Education Gallery in consultation with the Education Officer, the latter was unavailable for interview due to illness.

Implementing Case Studies - Arranging Access

This section outlines the procedures followed in initiating and implementing the case studies, and includes processes for resolving ethical issues which arose as a consequence of the research:

- (i) Directors and Exhibition Officers were sent a proposal outlining the research goals as well as a summary of questions to be asked of particular participants.
- (ii) Each Director was requested to provide formal approval in writing before research commenced.
- (iii) The proposal contained my telephone number and the name and telephone number of my supervisor in the event of inquiries.
- (iv) Following receipt of formal approval, the Director or Exhibition Officer (as nominated by the Director) was telephoned to arrange a convenient time and period of two days to conduct interviews at their institution.
- (v) Before conducting interviews, the purpose of the study was explained, the permission of each participant was sought for the taping of interviews and the taking of notes.
- (vi) Each participant was given a consent form to read and sign (a copy of which appears in the Appendices) which explained their rights and my obligations to them. This closely followed the Massey University Human Ethics Committee model (1990)

- (vii) Following the analysis of interview transcripts, and the writing of case study reports, drafts of material which related to information given by participants were sent to them for comment.
- (viii) Permission was also requested of the participants to be quoted directly, to be identified by name, and in the case of the Directors, if their institution could be identified within the thesis.
- (ix) As requested, agreement was received from all participants as above (viii).

Implementing Case Studies - Field Interviews

Each participant was interviewed individually in their own office. All interviews had a schedule of open-ended questions (see Appendix 1) for each staff position, although this was applied flexibly. All interviews were tape recorded, with the written consent of each participant. Due to the open-ended nature of the questions, interview times varied. The longest interviews were two and a half hours with an Exhibition Officer and the same length of time with a Curator. The shortest interview was half an hour with a Curator. General conversation was over and above this time.

The same pattern of interview organisation was followed at each institution. Interviews commenced with the Director, followed by the Exhibition Officer and then the Curator or Programme Co-ordinator. In commencing the series of interviews with the Director, I hoped firstly to "set the scene" by gaining the institutional viewpoint of the Exhibition Officer's role and status within the museum, along with an overview of their Museum. Three of the four Directors also presented me with a copy of the Exhibition Officer's job description. Salary scales for the Curator and Exhibition Officer of the institutions were also requested.

The second interview at each institution was with the Exhibition Officer. While none of the information given to me by the Director was discussed, I went to this second interview armed with the institution's view of the Exhibition Officer's role and status as represented by the job

description and their Director. It was possible for instance, to ask the Exhibition Officer for their views on the accuracy and relevance of their job description. However, there was a possibility that, as the focus of the study, the Exhibition Officers thought they should have been interviewed first. I clearly indicated to them that the Director's view was sought first only to provide a grounding in the "official" view of their role and status.

The importance of keeping interviews moving was balanced with the need to allow participants freedom to develop their thoughts. In some instances this meant that interviews moved so slowly that some questions had to be left out in the interests of maintaining rapport. It was also important that, where warranted, questions outside the interview schedule be asked in pursuit of an issue, or to elicit greater detail. However, on occasion, as the interview transcripts showed, some questions were missed. These were followed up later in writing or by telephone.

Implementing Case Studies - Field Documents

In addition to interviews with selected staff, museum documents were also collected. These included Exhibition Officers' job descriptions, the organisational charts of each museum, lists of salary scales, annual reports and any other exhibition documentation that might be available. The letter to the Director of each museum specifically requested access to these documents. In most cases these were made available, although obtaining salary information was somewhat more sensitive. While this was supplied, no salary figures have been quoted in the case studies to protect institutional and personal privacy.

Collation of Data

Following interviews at each institution, interview tapes were partially transcribed onto a photocopy of the appropriate schedule of questions. If questions asked differed from those on the schedule, they were written down with the answer underneath. Tapes were not fully transcribed as some of the information was by way of general conversation or was irrelevant

to the study. The transcripts are largely direct quotations, although some answers were paraphrased where responses were tangential to the question.

A short (2-3 pages) "field log" was also written during or immediately after conducting field research in each museum. This was a summary of impressions of the visit, and included notes on the exhibitions, the buildings, summaries of interviews and my own feelings of how the research progressed. Although short, these were useful aids when writing descriptive portions of the case studies.

After writing the case studies, each participant was sent sections of the relevant case study which were based on their interview. This gave them the opportunity to view these and to make comment before the case studies were finalised. Thus it was hoped that staff would have the opportunity to reconsider material that may be sensitive, and to correct any errors of fact or interpretation.

Amended drafts were used in the final production of the case studies. All participants agreed that they could be identified. Statements to this effect are held on file in the Museum Studies Unit, Massey University.

Analysis

Analysis of the information elicited from interviews, documentation and literature was required. Both individual and cross-case analysis was performed.

Transcripts of the three interviews conducted for each case study were photocopied and amalgamated into pre-conceived categories of the main topics for each question, through cutting and pasting. Thus the information on a particular issue from all three participants was easily comparable. Transcripts were also analysed using a cognitive mapping technique, described by Jones (1985:59-67). The manner in which the technique was applied was to "map" each interview by noting relevant information from transcripts on a sheet of paper

underneath headings derived from categories developed for the schedules of questions. During mapping new categories also emerged as some data did not fit existing categories. Some categories were identified as having such a close relationship that they were amalgamated. These relationships between the information was explored. Diagrams of these relationships formed the "maps." Individual cognitive maps were amalgamated to form a cognitive map of the case study.

Another analytical strategy was that of data immersion. Data immersion means that analysis is taking place throughout the research process. Having conducted the interviews, listened to interview tapes (usually twice), transcribed tapes personally and re-read them, conducted cognitive mapping of the interview transcripts, having kept a field log, and read museum documentation a number of times, my mind was full of information which was consciously and sub-consciously processed. Cognitive mapping and re-checking transcripts kept a check on the detail of much of the information that emanated from the interviews.

Immersion in the data is one thing, making sense of it is another. Glaser and Strauss (1967:76) recommend that categories should be constructed to fit the data. Data was "unpacked" into categories already developed and in some instances categories were re-ordered or amalgamated to fit the emerging data.

Documentary evidence was compared with information elicited from interviews. Charts of the staff structure of case study museums helped build an understanding of the Exhibition Officers' positions within organisational structures. This information was also compared to material from interviews which related to the status of Exhibition Officers. In one case study the chart was found to be inaccurate.

Most of the cross-case analysis was based on the written case study reports. Cognitive maps were not used, as I found data immersion and discussion to be the techniques which worked best for me. Comparison between case studies was used extensively in the cross-case analysis. Notes were kept on the differences and similarities that emerged from the different

case studies. Reference was made to the transcripts, cognitive maps and field logs to check on various details. Further analysis took place during the writing process as categories were refined, amalgamated or discarded, as the cross-case analysis took its written form.

Writing the Thesis Report

The case studies required an appropriate strategy for written presentation. One of the intentions was to represent the views of the participants. Therefore direct quotations of the participants were used extensively when discussing a particular issue in the case study. Thus all research participants were represented in their own words (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992:162-172). Quotations were combined with my own linking commentary and interpretation. In addition, the structure followed that of the question schedule used during the fieldwork phase, thereby maintaining the integrity of the information gathered during this phase of the research.

In the body of the case studies, participants are referred to by their first names, and in fact they all agreed to be identified in this manner after having been given a choice of options including anonymity. This enabled case studies to be "personalised": the "speaker" in the study became a person rather than a job title. However, when referring to the position rather than to the individual incumbents, the job title is used. Thus, in the manner in which the text is constructed, there is a recognition of both the individualistic and institutional nature of the roles of Exhibition Officers.

In maintaining ongoing relations with research participants, both on my part and that of the Museums Studies Unit, issues of censorship enter into the discussion of case study presentations. Some of the material was too sensitive to appear in print and was omitted through self-censorship. Some participants revised some of their original quotations as they could see that they had the potential to damage working relationships or professional reputations.

Limitations

While the research and presentation of case studies is largely “exemplary” in terms of the guidelines laid down by Yin (1993:146-149), a self-evaluation of research methods revealed some shortcomings of the research process. For instance the design of the interviews largely placed the control of the research with myself as interviewer rather than with the participants. The partial transcription of interview tapes meant that a decision was made regarding the value of interview data before analysis began. Thus, there was no possibility of the analysis being made from the full range of interview data. This was available on tape only. However, great care was taken in the selection of material for transcription. This resulted in the in-depth documentation of the focus of the research.

The research was carried out as ethically as possible. It is a concern and approach that was carried through all stages of the research, from beginning to end. Informed consent was the basis of an ethical approach to arranging and conducting interviews. Case studies were only completed after participants had the opportunity to comment on drafts. This allayed any fears participants had over their representation and ensured their participation until the completion of the project.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDIES

- 4.1 Margaret Cranwell, Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum.
- 4.2 Lisa Stachurski, Exhibition Officer, Taranaki Museum.
- 4.2.1 The Planning of Long-Term Exhibitions: Taranaki Museum
- 4.3 Bert Lett, Exhibitions Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum.
- 4.4 Jolene Douglas, Exhibition Officer, Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre.

The case studies combine material from interviews with the research participants, with information from institutional documentation including job descriptions, staff structure charts, annual reports and salary scales.

4.1 Margaret Cranwell, Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum

"You have to be a bit of everything, don't you? A super-adaptable metamorphosing person".

The Case Study

The following case study discusses the role of Margaret Cranwell, Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum, at the time research was conducted in August 1994.

The Setting

Hawke's Bay Museum

Hawke's Bay Museum is situated between Marine Parade and Herschell Street in Napier. It is administered by the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust. The Museum has a regularly changing temporary exhibition programme consisting of around twenty-one arts and craft exhibitions per year. The building is on two levels: ground floor and basement. It has four galleries on the ground floor, three of which are available to the temporary art programme. The other houses a long-term exhibition of the arts of the tangata whenua, Ngati Kahungunu, "Nga Tukemata: Nga Taonga o Ngati Kahungunu." The galleries in the basement level are predominantly devoted to the history of the region, although two of the five are also available for the art exhibitions programme.

All staff are employed by the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust. The staff who work in the Museum building consist of the Executive Director, Personal Assistant, Exhibitions Officer, Exhibitions Preparator (part-time), Curator of Trust Collections, Curator of Archives, Registrar, Education Officer (part-time), Manager (Technical and Maintenance), Office Manager, Public Relations/Merchandising Officer, Office Assistant, Museum Carpenter and

Photographic Assistant (part-time). Other staff of the Trust are responsible for the Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre (Hastings) and the Faraday Centre, Napier.

HAWKE'S BAY CULTURAL TRUST

STAFF STRUCTURE

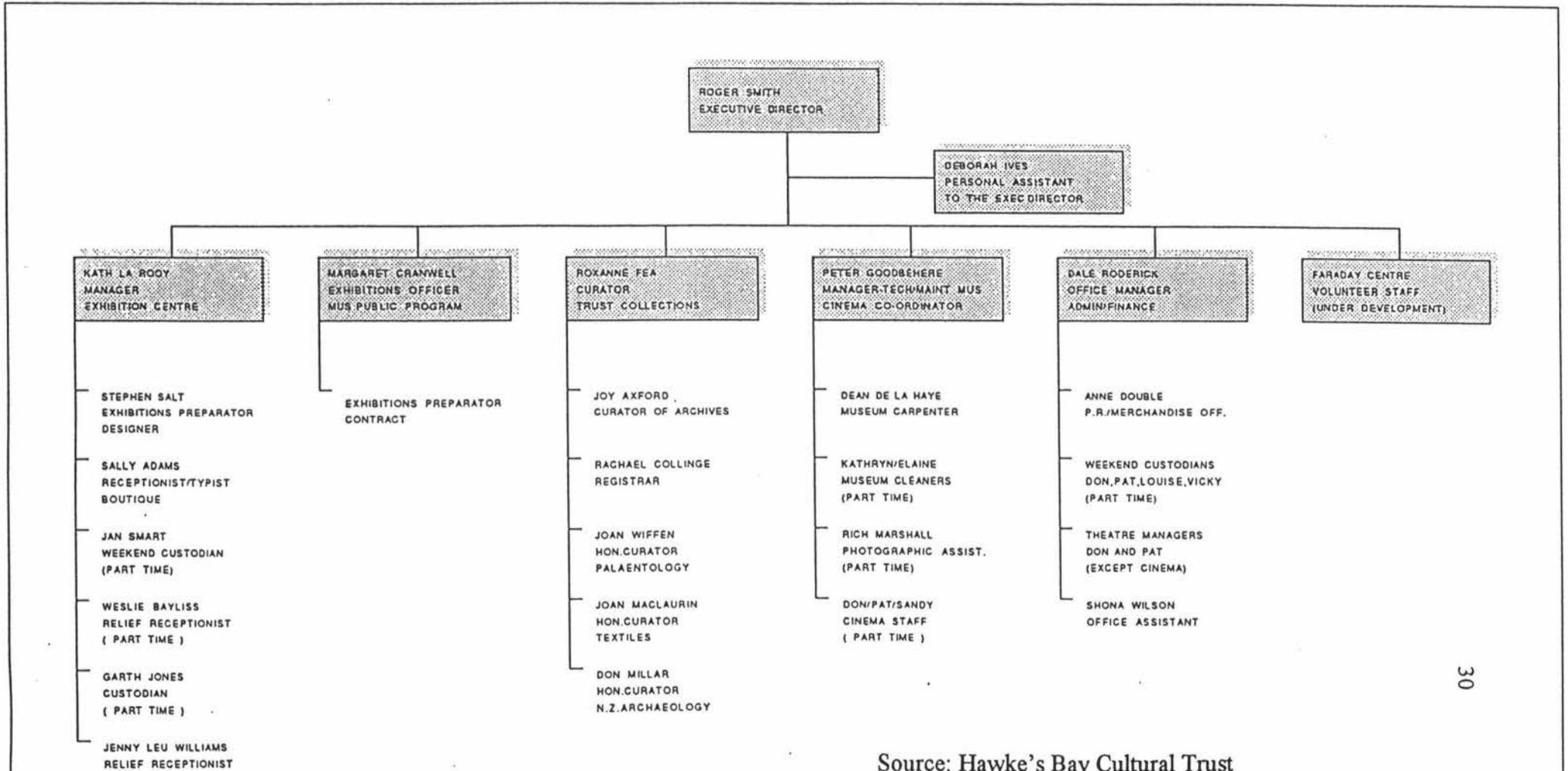


Fig. 1

The Participants:

Margaret Cranwell, Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum.

Margaret Cranwell has been the Exhibitions Officer of Hawke's Bay Museum for seven years, prior to which she worked as an art teacher and an illustrator of school publications. She has a Diploma in Fine Arts from Elam Art School, Auckland University.

Margaret explained the relevance of her art background to her appointment as Exhibitions Officer. She also discussed changes that have eventuated since the formation of the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust:

"Looking back at the structure then, I had an interest in arts which balanced out the Curator who was an archaeologist. With the move to the Trust the emphasis has been more on the museum and what I do now is more museum-oriented, rather than temporary exhibitions. There are less touring exhibitions now; more are internally generated from the collection."

Roger Smith, Executive Director, Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust

Roger Smith has worked in museums for thirteen years. He has been the Executive Director of the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust for six years, prior to which he was Exhibitions Officer at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, for seven years. He has now taken up the position of Director, Waikato Museum of Arts and History, Hamilton.

He described the role of his position at the time of the study as:

"Responsibility for the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust's activities; Hawke's Bay Museum, Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre, Faraday Centre and developing Trust Activities, for example the Dinosaur Centre, getting funding and publicity for the Trust. We're market aware if not market-oriented, with a high season market from tourists."

Roxanne Fea, Curator of Trust Collections, Hawke's Bay Museum.

Roxanne Fea has been the Curator of Collections at Hawke's Bay Museum for two years. Prior to taking up her present appointment she gained a Bachelor of Arts in Art History from Canterbury University and a Diploma in Museum Studies from Massey University.

She described the role of her position as:

"The primary researcher and interpreter of the Trust collections through a number of media such as exhibitions, publications, lectures and tours as well as curating outside shows."

The Status of the Exhibitions Officer

The staff structure chart (Fig. 1) indicates that there is a tier below the Executive Director on which a number of staff of the Trust are placed. These are the Manager (Exhibition Centre, Hastings); Exhibitions Officer; the Curator of Trust Collections; the Manager (Technical and Maintenance). The Volunteer staff of the Faraday Centre are also shown on this level, although it is difficult to equate them with the full-time paid staff. The chart also shows that the part-time Exhibitions Preparator is responsible to the Exhibitions Officer.

While the organisation chart shows that the Exhibitions Officer is on the same level as a number of other staff, it is necessary to qualify this from the findings of my research. Formally, the Exhibition Officer is designated as a "team leader". However, on the occasions when the Exhibition Preparator is not present, which is the majority of the week (an average of eight hours per week is allocated to the Exhibition Preparator), the "Exhibitions team" consists of the Exhibition Officer only. The Exhibitions Officer also has the responsibility of overseeing guest Curators. In comparison, the Curator of Collections supervises the Registrar, the Curator of Archives, and three Honorary Curators who work part-time on a voluntary basis.

A comparison of salaries between staff positions also provides an indication of formal status within an organisation.

Roger explained how salaries were determined at the Hawke's Bay Museum:

"The salary scale is not flat but is determined by a matrix system which takes into account the qualifications, job content and experience of the employees."

Currently the Exhibitions Officer is paid marginally more than the Curator. However, future adjustments will most likely bring their salaries closer together.

Margaret summed up her understanding of how status was measured:

"When it comes down to it, status is measured in money - when it comes down to where you fit in the structure, and what responsibilities you have."

She explained how she felt about her status in the museum:

"Traditionally, the Curator's position was regarded as superior to that of the Exhibition Officer, but under the team structure greater acknowledgment is made of each department's contribution. I enjoy the autonomy of this structure but also recognise some of the prospective pitfalls which can arise should communication or attention to detail in the implementation process break down."

Roger was definite in giving Margaret equal standing with other senior staff:

"Margaret is a team leader and has equal status with all the other team leaders."

Roxanne also indicated the high status the Exhibitions Officer held within Hawke's Bay Museum:

"The Exhibition Officer's role is really valued here and has a big role as a public face of the Museum."

In acknowledging the importance of Margaret's role in the Museum, Roxanne thought it was important that she be given tangible recognition:

"One form of tangible recognition would be the provision of increased human resources within the Exhibitions team: giving Margaret the resources to achieve the desired standard of exhibition design would be a very useful acknowledgment of her professionalism."

Another way of determining a staff member's status, is to ascertain if other staff perceived them as a "professional." Both Roger and Roxanne were adamant that Margaret was a "museum professional" and that she performed her duties in a professional manner.

Margaret also viewed herself as member of the wider "museum profession":

"Yes, I do, I suppose. I've worked in most aspects of the job. An understanding of all aspects of the job is important. Going to conferences helps understand the wider nature of the museum profession".

I asked Margaret to what extent she felt exhibition staff were recognised within the "museum profession":

"It's not something I've really thought about or worked towards. It's not something I've sought. I tend to seek personal job satisfaction."

The Role of the Exhibitions Officer

The institutional requirements of the Exhibitions Officer's position are outlined in the Job Description (Appendix 4). In summary, it defines her role as the planning and implementation of the exhibitions programme, and as the team leader of public programmes.

Roger summarised his views of Margaret's role as Exhibitions Officer. As Executive Director, his views could also be said to present the institutional view of the role of this position:

"She's the exhibition manager, the designer - a key part of our public programmes. A lot of the exhibition activities are devised by Margaret and Roxanne."

In discussing Margaret's job description, Roger felt that it did cover her role, but was flexible enough *"not to constrict her activities."*

He noted the variance of Exhibition Officers' positions:

"You'll find differences in all museum Exhibition Officer jobs in various museums. It depends on the support staff and the structure of the museum."

The relationship between the Executive Director's position and that of the Exhibition Officer was also discussed:

"Margaret is answerable to me. We have exhibition meetings once a month to look at proposals from local artists and touring shows. Margaret is responsible for her area. We try to highlight excellence and innovation. If you employ somebody you have to have confidence in them and Margaret has a good background. The Director should also use the strengths of their Exhibitions Officer. Here the Exhibitions Officer has to be the designer, installer, sponsorship getter, light-bulb installer and monitor of public performance. We

need to look at developing performance measures: money spent to visitor numbers. Exhibition Officers need to look for corporate support."

Roger's explanation showed that Margaret has a large degree of autonomy over the Exhibitions function and that her role has, in part, been shaped by her own talents and "strengths". In addition to duties in the exhibitions programme, it is worth noting the fund-raising role.

Having examined the institutional view of the role of the Exhibitions Officer of Hawke's Bay Museum, it is necessary to discuss Margaret's definition of her role:

"With the move to the Trust the emphasis has been on collection-generated exhibitions. Since the appointment of Roxanne as Curator of Collections in 1992, responsibility for curating as well as design and installation of exhibitions has been relieved. I now concentrate on the design and installation of collection-based exhibitions, alongside administration, design and installation of the temporary exhibition programme. Previous to the establishment of the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust (1989) approximately 50% of the temporary programme was sourced through NZAGDC (now Exhibitour). The figure since 1989 has reduced to an average of 8%. As a consequence a lot more time is spent sourcing and generating collection-based exhibitions."

Margaret described the main responsibilities of her position as:

"Exhibition planning and design, making sure the whole thing is up and running on time and working within the budget and the capabilities of the staff resources that you have. And exhibition administration."

Although these are the "main responsibilities", Margaret does much more than this, as evidenced by the duties listed in the Job Description and other comments from Margaret herself.

I asked her what differences there were between the role described in her job description and her own definition of the job:

"Generally you pick up areas that aren't covered by other staff, but this isn't covered by the job description. For example we have had quite long periods without a Registrar or Curator on the staff. The expectation is that the Exhibition Officer will rise to the occasion."

Following the resignation of the previous Curator in 1987, Margaret performed many of the curatorial functions for six years prior to Roxanne's appointment as Curator of Trust Collections. Some of her present duties such as sourcing exhibitions and undertaking research on exhibitors and their works could be said to be "curatorial" functions.

Margaret also considered ways in which a change to her role could improve her effectiveness:

"My role could be more effective within the current structure as an exhibitions designer and having an exhibitions curator. I would concentrate on design rather than administration. The opportunity to retrain in museum design would need to be provided to grow with the institution."

In order to achieve this, not only would Margaret need to be relieved of her administrative duties, further technical assistance would be required to cope with exhibition installation. The changes she suggested would also require the creation of a completely new curatorial position, or a substantial alteration of the position of Curator of Trust Collections.

Roxanne also described how she saw Margaret's role:

"Primarily physically and visually implementing exhibitions. She has a pivotal role in coordinating the exhibition programme. There is a strong emphasis on liaising with local and

national artists and being aware of developments in which the programme moves. In summary; initiating, co-ordinating and implementing exhibitions."

Among all the participants there seemed to be little difference in their perception of the role of the Exhibitions Officer.

Exhibitions Philosophy

Margaret explained the philosophy she applied to her work:

"Exhibitions present the public face of what happens behind the scenes in Museums. The philosophical process building the exhibition centres around good communication. In developing the exhibition ideas it is through consultation with curatorial staff and in some instances the wider community to come to grips with the essence of the subject: with staff assisting on the implementation of the design, scale models and carefully drawn plans alongside a detailed work-plan to meet exhibition guidelines - are all essential tools of communication. If an exhibition falls down somewhere along the line it is usually due to poor communication."

Exhibition Planning

Through an examination of the exhibition planning processes in Hawke's Bay Museum, this section discusses the implementation of the role of the Exhibitions Officer

Margaret is responsible for administering her institution's exhibition programme. She explained how the programme is drawn together:

"The four main sources contributing to the museum's annual plan are: Hawke's Bay Museum's collections; exhibitions sourced from the region and community; events of national significance and artists of national significance and finally Exhibitour

programmes. Suggestions also come from monthly team leaders meetings. However there is no current forum for staff as a whole to present and discuss ideas. Informal discussions are also held with the Trust's two honorary curators as to potential exhibition ideas from their specialist areas of the collection. From these various sources Roxanne and I construct an exhibition plan which is submitted to the Exhibitions Committee for further discussion."

Margaret explained how this was done:

"I come up with the annual plan that goes to the Exhibitions Committee. I've suggested a series of exhibitions on the textiles collection, for example "Lavender and Lace", and "Dress for Greater Freedom", a collection-based exhibition which linked with '93 Women's Suffrage Year. The Exhibitions Committee comprises Roger, Roxanne, myself, Kath La Rooy (Manager, Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre) and Stephen Salt (then Exhibition Preparator, Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre)."

However, she did not think the meeting was structured in a way that brought out a critical discussion of the ideas presented.

Roxanne described the way in which she and Margaret shared the responsibility for generating ideas for exhibitions:

"Both Margaret and I share the role of coming up with ideas for shows. We both discuss how projects fit into the programme. Margaret co-ordinates outside proposals that come to the Museum. I look at the collection for shows and we both work on shows that come to the museum."

Roxanne initiates about a third of the institution's exhibitions. It is important to find out how she conveys her ideas to the Margaret:

"I sometimes prepare a brief, but often a brief would be a discussion around the table. For a show next year on technology, I'm working on a full brief including concept, message, labels and programmes, so that Margaret can visualise in advance what she needs to do. Often I would give her the labels and a list of objects - the design brief comes from Margaret's own creative brain."

The combination of formal briefing and informal discussion leaves a great deal to the discretion and creativity of the Exhibitions Officer in Curator-driven exhibitions.

Roxanne continued:

"You find that working so closely together, you visualise how Margaret might work in putting it together. There's a real sense of trust that the exhibition will be realised true to the initial aim of the show. Constant communication helps the end product."

However, Margaret indicated that the communication processes necessary to the development of exhibition concepts were hampered by lack of resources:

"I wouldn't say it was ideal. Given more time, more discussion could go into the exhibition ideas. Having time to sit down and thrash out all the facets. It's more to do with staff resources than a lack of willingness."

Exhibitions appear to be organised with little formality of communication. Margaret explained that the need for a written exhibition brief depended on the type of exhibition:

"For the Museum collection-based exhibitions, a detailed brief prepared well in advance is extremely helpful. This gives a good lead-in time for planning design, liaising with other staff members regards their involvement with the exhibition and also outside services and contractors. The brief is mainly discussing the exhibition philosophy and design ideas that

can be in writing or just something that is discussed. We'd discuss it before it is put in writing."

Resources

To fulfil her role, the Exhibitions Officer needs to be given adequate resources.

Margaret explained the difficulties she had in maintaining the current number of exhibitions:

"...twenty-one exhibitions is an average number. This was set when we were taking touring shows, but now we generate more of our own and this has increased the workload while the Preparator's hours have been reduced."

I asked her if technical assistance should be increased to cope with the workload:

"It could be more flexible than it is at present. Previously two days a week was a good amount. The hours could be flexible to have, say, one week during the change period rather than so many hours per week."

In discussing the balance of exhibition staff to other museum staff Margaret again expressed the need for more staff resources:

"I would have some difficulty in saying we are adequately staffed. We've had our hours cut back for exhibition preparation so that there is difficulty getting downstairs, especially to change the museum exhibitions. I still have the responsibility for exhibition administration. The job needs to be re-defined. It's grown since the advent of the Cultural Trust and the change in Mission Statement, bringing a more equal balance of museum and arts exhibitions."

Staff resources allocated to the Exhibitions function were also of concern to Roxanne:

"Any museum person who says they have enough resources is not ambitious enough! Most museums I would say not, especially the human resources. Nine galleries and twenty exhibitions with one person to do it is totally inadequate. In terms of financial resources, the same problem as well. What we do with that is a testimony to the skill of the exhibitions team, particularly Margaret Cranwell. We're reduced to two main collection-based shows a year and stretched for human resources in touring shows."

Roger explained that while he recognised the need for additional technical assistance for Margaret, funding was not available to extend the Exhibition Preparator's hours.

Standards and Feedback

This section discusses how standards are set for the Exhibition Officer's work and the ways in which she receives feedback on her work.

Roger advised that performance standards are to be found in the Exhibitions Officer's job description and the Cultural Trust's Annual Report. However, the standards in the Job Description do not appear to be very specific. Many are qualified with the term "where appropriate", leaving Margaret as the arbiter of the performance of these tasks. As Roger indicated, the job description was not meant to act as a constraint on her activities. This is consistent with the high degree of autonomy Margaret has over the Exhibitions function.

He explained how he measured Margaret's performance:

"I measure it on what the programme is like, visitor reaction, if it's ready on time, the number of associated activities around it, initiatives such as sponsorship and feedback from our visitors. We do survey our visitors. I expect Margaret to note that. I'd like to see exhibitions that were a bit more provocative."

Margaret expressed an awareness of the lack of evaluation of her work by colleagues or museum visitors. She acknowledged that the level of autonomy she has in the production of exhibitions should be balanced by integrating evaluation in various through the exhibition development process.

She explained that while that visitor comments books were of limited use in gaining critical feedback, the museum's reception staff were excellent sources of information on visitor preferences:

"The front of house staff have a pretty good idea what people do and don't like...We don't have time - we have to concentrate on our work, so we miss out on the response in the galleries."

Roxanne initiates exhibitions based on the Museum's collections. I asked her how she measures the implementation of her ideas by Margaret:

"We don't have a formal evaluation system, but I make mental notes. For certain larger shows we have set up an evaluation system for the public. We have a visitor survey for 1993/94 and I'll give you a copy."

Roxanne explained how she gave Margaret feedback on the completion of an exhibition:

"We discuss it afterwards. We haven't implemented many formal evaluations. We discuss it in-house and wander around together and build that into the next project."

While Margaret indicated that feedback was useful, there was no time to act on it immediately:

"We wouldn't really have time to make changes but we would build these comments into our next exhibition. We would definitely think about making changes to the longer term exhibitions. Nga Tukemata needs more interpretation and more contemporary art."

Roxanne gave a summary of the esteem in which she held Margaret:

"I'm always excited when Margaret approaches an exhibition to see how it's going to turn out. I've never once seen an exhibition of hers that didn't once come up to its full potential."

Training

With Margaret's heavy workload and minimal staff support, it is imperative that she is well-trained. She spoke of the training she had received while in the employment of the Hawke's Bay Museum:

"I've been on quite a few courses on conservation and some looking at exhibition design, museum management, conferences and seminars."

Margaret indicated that there were other areas in which she would like some training:

"Definitely computers and plan drawing, especially if you're working with a bigger team...Tony Cairns (Liaison Officer, MONZ) was talking about the possibility of working with their designers."

Roger explained that while he would be supportive of any staff seeking training, funding was a problem. He said that as a staff member Margaret had access to seminars hosted by Hawke's Bay Museum over the past twelve months, mainly in marketing and sponsorship. As a former Exhibition Officer, he was of the opinion that exhibition staff should network more to improve skills.

4.2 Lisa Stachurski, Exhibition Officer, Taranaki Museum.

"I think I see myself more as an exhibition designer rather than a technician..."

The Case Study

The following case study discusses the role of the Exhibition Officer, Taranaki Museum, at the time research was conducted in September 1994.

The Setting

Taranaki Museum

Taranaki Museum is located in Ariki Street, New Plymouth. It is administered by the Community Services Department, New Plymouth District Council. All staff are employees of the Council. Entry to the Museum is free. The Museum has a regularly changing programme of art works in the temporary exhibition gallery, with around twelve to fourteen exhibitions per year. The exhibition content of the Education Gallery also changes at six-monthly intervals. The Museum staff consist of a Director, Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director, Exhibition Officer, Registrar, Archivist, Office Manager and Data Inputter, Photo Technician, Technician, Education Officer (paid through Vote Education) plus part-time staff.

The Participants:

Lisa Stachurski, Exhibition Officer, Taranaki Museum.

Lisa Stachurski has been the Exhibition Officer at Taranaki Museum for approximately twenty months. Prior to her present employment she spent one and a half years in the exhibitions department at Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton initially as a Volunteer, subsequently as an Exhibitions Technician and finally as a Graphic Designer. She has a Diploma in Industrial Design from Wellington Polytechnic.

Taranaki Museum: Staff Structure

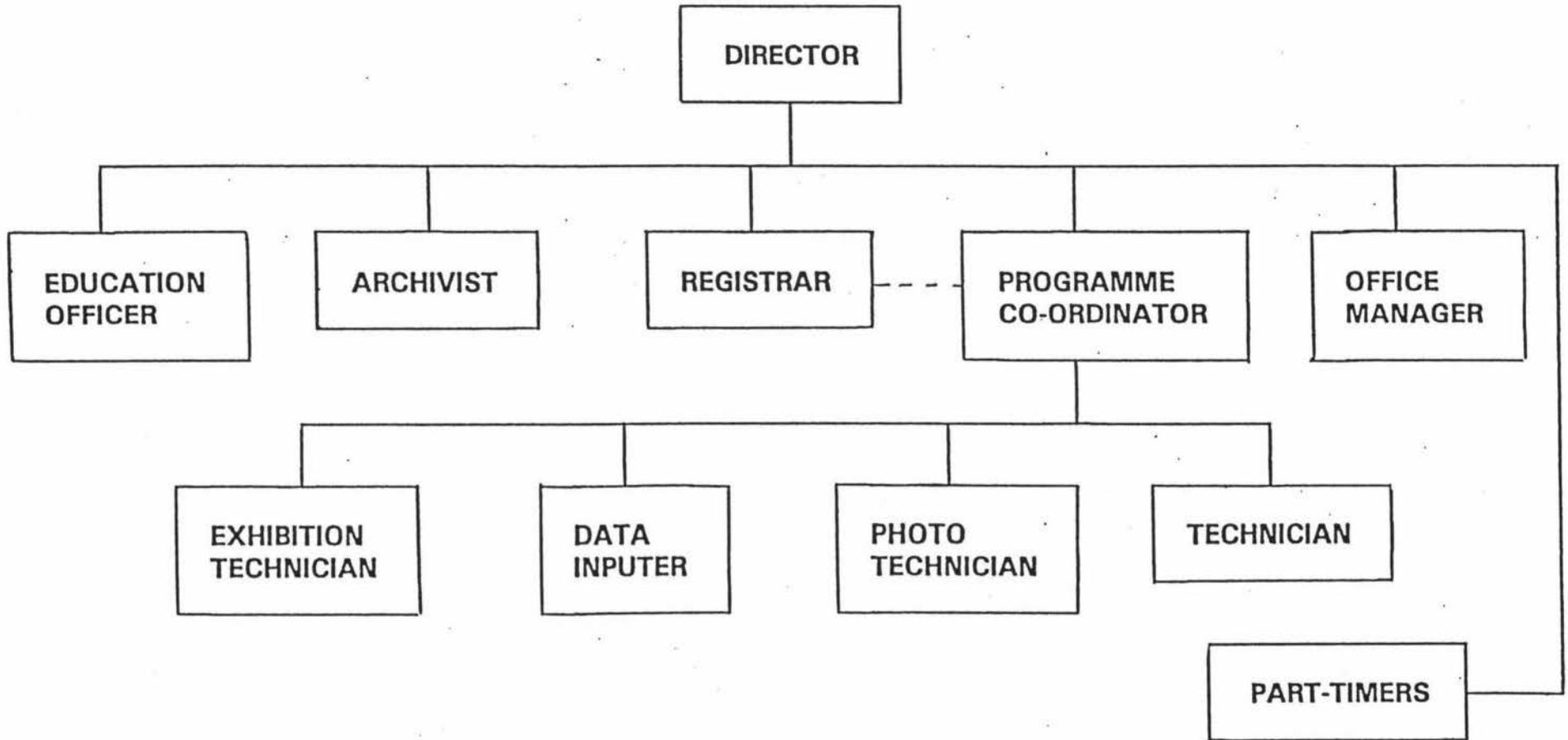


Fig. 2

Source: Taranaki Museum

Lisa discussed what attracted her to the position of Exhibition Officer:

"My design background, and when I arrived in Hamilton I thought the museum would be a place I'd want to work - it just grew from there really. I initially had ambitions of becoming an architect and have a keen interest in interior design - these also have a large part to play in exhibition design work. I always wanted to maintain all facets of art or as many as possible in my chosen career, and going to the Design School also broadened my basic interests".

Ron Lambert, Director, Taranaki Museum.

Ron Lambert has been the Director of Taranaki Museum for eighteen years, prior to which he was Deputy Director of the Museum for four years. He was involved in exhibitions in both positions until 1978 when the Museum employed an Exhibition Technician. He described the role of his position as mainly managerial with some curatorial input:

"...I also like to get involved in getting the heritage message across and get involved in textual material."

Kelvin Day, Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director

Kelvin has been in his present position for three years, prior to which he was Director of Porirua Museum for three years. As Exhibition Officer, Lisa is directly responsible to Kelvin.

Kelvin summed up his role:

"To co-ordinate programmes for the Museum - curatorial, exhibitions and public programmes."

The Status of the Exhibition Officer

The staff structure chart (Fig. 2) provides some information on the formal status of the staff of this institution. It shows that the Programme Co-ordinator is on the same level as the Education Officer, Archivist and Office Manager. It also shows a position of Exhibition Technician at a level below that of the preceding staff. The current designation of this position is Exhibition Officer, showing that the chart is outdated.

According to the Director, there are two levels of staffing, with the Director, and the Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director occupying the managerial level and the Exhibition Officer, occupying the other level alongside other staff. He advised that the staff structure chart is not an accurate representation of the current staff structure.

While her formal status may be said to be that of an equal to most of the Museum's staff, it is important to ascertain whether this is supported by comments made by the participants.

Ron advised:

"Informally, she'd be on the second tier after Kelvin and I. She'd be equivalent to the Archivist and Education Officer. That's something she brings personally to it."

Kelvin explained the importance of Lisa's position and the regard in which she was held by other staff of the Museum:

"It's an extremely important position. We can fall quite easily on one position. If the exhibitions aren't up to it, it's going to reflect badly on us. It's crucial, just as crucial as the position of Curator. She's held in high regard by the other staff. Not only does she do an extremely good job, she's a very pleasant person."

Lisa explained how she viewed her own position:

“The longer remaining staff still call me ‘Display Technician’. I think of myself as more of an exhibitions designer/officer. I think what I do as my job has far more content than that of ‘Display Technician’, which was the previous person’s job description.”

The change of designation from “Display Technician” to “Exhibition Officer” is an indication that the latter is a more accurate reflection of the role of this position in Taranaki Museum.

Salary levels are another indication of formal status. The salaries for the staff of Taranaki Museum are set by the New Plymouth District Council.

Lisa explained how she viewed her present remuneration:

“While at the present time I accept what I’m being paid, I certainly wouldn’t like to stay in this pay bracket. If you were to draw the comparison between my job designing in this institution to that of industry you would see an increasing difference. I think the problem lies with the current structure Council has in place, which doesn’t recognise diversity of jobs, qualifications and experience, etc.”

As salary levels were set by the District Council a comparison with other Museum employees is somewhat redundant as a way of measuring status within the Museum. What it did reflect was the perception of the worth of Lisa’s position by Council officers. Ron explained that Lisa’s salary was equivalent to that of the Graphic Designer at the Govett Brewster Art Gallery and was *“still too low for Lisa.”*

Status within organisations can also be measured in less formal ways. Recognition of an employee’s skill and dedication can result in someone being regarded as a “professional” in the sense of recognition of one’s competence and expertise.

Ron explained:

"She hasn't done the museum diploma but I've never considered her to be anything but a museum professional. She came with good reports and was keen to get into museums."

I also asked Kelvin whether he regarded Lisa as a "museum professional":

"Yes. She has very high standards. She is also very caring about the well-being of the object. Everything is done to the highest level. She's not afraid to learn. She'll go down and research various display techniques or inquire about the correct curatorial approaches for the display of an object, so she sets herself very high standards."

I also asked Lisa whether she considered herself a museum professional. She explained that she felt isolated from other institutions and what was going on in them. This may indicate that the establishment of networks among museum staff is important to the integration of staff into a "museum profession".

The Role of the Exhibition Officer

This section discusses the role of the Exhibition Officer from the points of view of the Director, the Exhibition Officer and the Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director. In addition the Exhibition Officer's job description been utilised to elicit the institutional requirements of this position.

The introduction to the job description states:

Description:

The Exhibition Officer will be responsible for the installation of temporary and longer term exhibitions within the museum, and from time to time, exhibitions and displays held outside the museum.

The incumbent will also be responsible for the upkeep of the museum workshop.” (New Plymouth District Council, 1993:1. Appendix 4).

The institutional requirements of the Exhibition Officer's position are shown in the job description. However, it is very brief and does not describe the full range of duties performed by the Exhibition Officer. She does more than install exhibitions. Other sections of the job description document some of the design functions carried out by this position.

Both the Director and Exhibition Officer indicated that the Job Description was an adequate description of the Exhibition Officer's functions.

Comments of the Director should also be noted. Ron described Lisa's role in the Museum:

“To design and execute the exhibition programme. To design the exhibitions for the exhibition programme and to get them in place with a little assistance... One of her main roles over the next year is going to be the design of the next permanent exhibitions and cases that will have to last for maybe 25 years.”

The design of new long-term exhibitions is additional to Lisa's current duties. This project incorporates a greater design content than her current responsibilities, so that she would be justified in seeing her role as a designer of exhibitions.

Lisa discussed what she saw as her main responsibilities:

“To design and then to put into reality those designs. I do our adverts, graphics, and that sort of thing for promotional purposes, as well as looking after downstairs - the galleries. But I see my main role as redesigning the whole exhibition space downstairs as well as installing temporary exhibitions. It's taken me ten months to get around to it because up to now I've been busy doing 12 temporary exhibitions; brochure designs, education panels, etc. Things just seem to crop up. It's going to take a couple of years to complete. We've got a lot

to consider from budgets to contacting the various iwi, which will all lead to eventually changing our image."

Kelvin briefly described Lisa's role:

"To plan and execute to the highest professional standards as she can, the exhibition programme, as required. She is also responsible for preparing graphic material, advertisements, brochures..."

Between the three staff, there was little difference in description of the Exhibition Officer's role. However, Ron and Lisa were more specific than Kelvin in stressing the design element of her job. The Exhibition Officer is also responsible for the design of the Education Gallery. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond my control I was unable to interview the Education Officer.

Exhibition Philosophy

Lisa explained her philosophy of exhibitions:

"There are basic rules you should follow when you design anything. You've got to know who you're designing for and in turn aiming your design at - who's going to see what you're designing. Obviously budget comes into it to a certain extent, but initially I don't worry about it. Then there's research and what you're actually considering displaying. Bringing it all together is important. It's a communication medium - you should always be communicating/conveying, even if it's visually - and it's about education/ understanding and portraying knowledge."

Whereas Ron indicated the Museum targeted specific audiences, Lisa explained that she usually designed for as wide an audience as possible.

Exhibition Planning

A discussion of exhibition planning processes shows a major part of the Exhibition Officer's role in action. The ways in which the Programme Co-ordinator and the Exhibition Officer work together may show some of the boundaries of the Exhibition Officer's role.

Ron explained the processes that are used to bring the exhibition programme together:

"Staff in general discuss. This year we're putting together ideas for next year. Our Education Officer has ideas for her area. The Archivist acts as curator of our textile collection and comes up with ideas. I occasionally come up with something. Kelvin is interested in using the collection more than we have. We try to target specific audiences rather than mass appeal. We try to have as wide a range of exhibitions as possible."

He also discussed his involvement in the exhibition programme:

"Kelvin and I will discuss what we want to do, but it's not as formal as me approving the programme. I like the idea of ideas coming from as wide a range of staff as possible. Unless you get that, you tend to get stereotyped."

Lisa gave an outline of the process used in exhibition planning:

"Kelvin is the Programme Co-ordinator. He's the one who organises and arranges who's going to be exhibiting and in what time frame. We then talk to the artists to see what they to achieve. So far I'm not really involved in deciding the programme. Once people are scheduled in I'll discuss what they require. Kelvin books them in, I basically go from

there...It works this way and I'm quite happy to do my part and for Kelvin to do his. I really pick up what Kelvin has arranged."

As Kelvin is responsible for the exhibitions programme, I asked him to what extent he initiated exhibitions:

"To a degree. It's my job to go out and see what's around and to bring them back and then to say to Lisa and Ron 'Hey, how about doing something on that.' There are people who come to the Museum with ideas. At least half our exhibitions come from our collection."

Kelvin explained how he communicated ideas to Lisa:

"I involve her as much as I possibly can. Obviously if she's not with you it's going to be a hard job. So every step of the way I talk it over with her and see what her feelings are. And sometimes it may not be viable and she'll come up with reasons why not."

This indicates the importance of close verbal communication, and a willingness to accept feedback from Lisa.

I also asked him if Lisa was involved in the planning process for exhibitions:

"I go to her with an idea and ask her to come up with how we're going to display it. I put that on her because she's got the skills."

He explained how he worked with Lisa in implementing the exhibition programme:

"We have two types. We have our temporary exhibitions and then there's the other side, the permanent exhibitions which we're in the process of re-doing. So what we do is sit down and work out just what we're going to do with the temporary exhibitions. With the permanent exhibitions I've prepared a brief and asked her to come up with a design. Once

she's done that we'll take it up to the rest of the staff. That's basically how I relate to that position."

I asked Lisa if she was involved in developing briefs and other planning documents for exhibitions:

"We don't really need briefs for our temporary exhibitions. Often, all I have to do is hang framed works, plan where to put them, design signage and advertising. There's not much call for briefs in the temporary area. Briefs will be needed for the gallery revamp and Kelvin's done stage one of that. Even for the education area we just liaise and don't bother with briefs, except for the year's general overview....The informal manner seems to work for us. If I worked in a larger institution it would be different, but here we communicate and it works really well. There's basically the two of us - Kelvin is curator to a certain extent. I simply follow on from his suggestions, and any problems - just zap downstairs."

With the redevelopment of the exhibition galleries, Lisa's role may change. I asked her if she was going to design the exhibitions and the gallery spaces as well:

"Yes, the content and the floor plan - the overall theme. Kelvin knows what artefacts are accessible and appropriate in the collection. Our prime objective is telling the story of Taranaki and taking the audience on a journey through history. We're trying to organise a path for that. He's given me a storyline to follow. That's the brief to a certain extent."

Kelvin works with Lisa on exhibition planning. It is important to find out to what extent he felt it was possible for her to translate a concept into a finished exhibition:

"I think she can do that successfully. As long as I explain right at the beginning the significance of some pieces and roughly how I see it fitting into what we're trying to achieve. And she does it well."

In the planning of exhibitions, communication between Lisa and Kelvin was highlighted as a very important component in the formation of exhibitions.

Resources

It is important for the Exhibition Officer to have the resources to fulfil the requirements of her position.

I asked Lisa if she thought her area was adequately resourced:

"I'd like a bench saw, if that's what you mean. For what we're doing in the next six months I could find that there are things I definitely need - but generally it's okay. Sometimes I could do with a helping hand, someone who has more carpentry skills than myself and with some empathy for exhibition design. But all in all I feel I manage without sacrificing any element of the design."

I put the same question to Kelvin:

"As far as the number of exhibitions, yes, I do. I'd like to see a lot more resources put into the permanent exhibitions. Resources would also be needed to employ professional builders. While we can do that to a certain degree now, obviously the more resources the more we can achieve. We have to cut our cloth to fit. I'd like more financial resources."

Standards and Feedback

Documents such as the Exhibition Officer's job description and annual reports did not contain specific standards for Museum exhibitions. However, the interview participants provided some information on the standards they expected of the Exhibition Officer.

I asked Ron what his standards were for the Exhibition Officer to follow:

"I don't think the standards I set would be as high as those she sets herself. I'm quite happy with that."

I asked Lisa what the standards were that she set for herself:

"I like to achieve a different theme each time. I try to design an identity for each exhibition which often can only be done through the signage. Unfortunately, limited time and budget is the main problem. We have standard frames I use - but I'd like to update these. With an exhibiting time of approximately four weeks there is not always a lot of time for preparation, when other projects also require time and work. I basically try to do my best."

Kelvin initiates much of Lisa's work. He explained what he expected of her:

"...I require a fairly high standard of presentation, and that's how I judge it. And also I suppose judging by the public. Well, later, we'll get into some evaluation, but at the moment it's in-house."

It is also important that she be given some feedback on the success of her work. Ron indicated briefly:

"The stuff she's putting out is good and I say so. There is public acknowledgment at openings too."

Kelvin explained how he gave Lisa feedback on the completion of an exhibition:

"I always comment on it and talk it over. I always talk to her about it one to one. I always make sure she gets feedback."

While Ron and Kelvin indicated they gave Lisa feedback on her work, it is important to find out what she thought she received in that way:

“Generally the whole staff is supportive. You do hear from the public as well. People who come in regularly and say how much brighter the Museum looks and how the shop has made the area look better.”

I also asked Lisa if she built this feedback into the following exhibitions:

“No, not really, but then it is dependent upon exactly what is said. Most feedback that I've heard hasn't been that critical of what has been achieved so far, which is great. I can see for myself whether something works or not - I'm probably more self-critical than anything.”

Training

For continued skills development, training is crucial. I asked Ron what formal and on job training Lisa had received:

“She's got the Polytech Design Diploma and has worked at Waikato Museum. She hasn't had a lot of specific training that we've initiated. I'm more interested in her getting to know what's going on in museums. She's been down to Wellington and been introduced to various people by Kelvin and she went to the conference. She would go to any workshops that are going. Someone like Lisa would make use of any opportunities and adapt anything she's learned back here.”

Lisa discussed the training opportunities she had available to her:

“I'm keen to do a carpentry course. Basically it's up to me. If I want to do a course I put forward a proposal to Ron. He's extremely receptive with things like that. I haven't been

notified if there is a qualification I'm lacking, so to date I've only been on one-day courses which have been relevant to the entire staff, i.e. emergency procedures etc."

Having attended both, I can also attest to the fact that Lisa and Kelvin attended a workshop at The Science Centre and Manawatu Museum entitled "Exhibition Planning for new Museums" and the 1994 Museums Association of Aotearoa New Zealand Conference at the same venue.

Ron indicated a willingness for Lisa to attend further training courses and go on visits to other museums. This may alleviate her feeling of being isolated from the staff of other museums.

4.2.1 The Planning Of Long-Term Exhibitions: The Redevelopment Of Exhibitions in Taranaki Museum.

This sub-case study discusses an example of the planning processes used for a long-term exhibition. It also provides supplemental information on the role of the Exhibition Officer in Taranaki Museum. Research for this case study took place in August 1995, nearly one year after the completion of field research for the case study on the role of the Exhibition Officer in Taranaki Museum. Information was gathered from a discussion with Kelvin Day (Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director) and Lisa Stachurski (Exhibitions Officer).

Taranaki Museum has completed the first stage of the planned redevelopment of their long-term exhibitions which occupy the bulk of their gallery space. The only two spaces which are not filled by these exhibitions are the Education Gallery and the Temporary Exhibitions gallery. The general aim of the new exhibitions is to tell the history of Taranaki in an episodic manner. By moving around the galleries, visitors will pass through representations of various episodes and time periods of Taranaki's history. The new displays stem from the mission statement of Taranaki Museum.

The redevelopment will take place in three stages, to be implemented in three separate financial years. Stage One was completed in the 1994/95 financial year. Stage Two, currently in the planning phase, must be completed by 30 June 1996, the end of the 1995/96 financial year. Stage Three is planned for completion in the 1996/97 financial year.

The following discussion outlines the processes used in the recently-completed Stage One of the exhibition redevelopment. Some further discussion is also made of the processes to date of Stage Two. A copy of the briefing document for Stage One was also obtained to provide further information.

Background

Most of the current long-term exhibitions at Taranaki Museum are around twenty-five years old. When Lisa Stachurski, a trained designer, joined the staff of Taranaki Museum as Exhibition Officer, Kelvin Day, Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director, believed this presented a good opportunity to plan new exhibitions, utilising her design skills.

Stage One

Stage One of the redevelopment has two themes. Firstly the geology and Natural History of the Taranaki Province and secondly early human settlement (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries). Within Stage One a number of aspects are presented: geological, archaeological, natural historical and Maori. The story of the journey of (Mount) Taranaki is told from the point of view of a nominee of Taranaki iwi.

A brief was prepared by Kelvin which detailed the story told within each section and the specimens, artefacts and images to be used. It also contained the text for the labels. The brief provided a basis for Lisa to initiate the design, which she discussed with Kelvin. The general physical design approach was to make each exhibit self-contained. A three-dimensional model was made by Lisa following the design. This gave staff an opportunity to view and discuss the plans and the model. The Director and the Education Officer had particular contributions to make in their specialist areas of natural history and education, respectively. Dimensions from the plans were taped out on the floor to establish if there was enough space for people to walk through and for goods to come in the entrance. Physical construction of the new exhibition walls was completed by a contract carpenter who followed Lisa's designs. The walls were subsequently painted by Kelvin. The installation of all display elements such as specimens, artefacts, images and text panels followed and saw the completion of Stage One.

Stage Two

The theme of the second stage of the exhibition redevelopment is the history and identity of the many iwi of the region. It is intended that the display will be both historical and contemporary. It is currently envisaged that a story of each iwi will be told, using their taonga and text panels. Panels may be in Maori as well as English. How this is to be achieved, and whether this approach is acceptable, will be the result of discussions with iwi representatives. Both Lisa and Kelvin stressed that the design will be driven very much by the wishes of the iwi. Around two months will be taken up meeting with the various iwi to discuss the proposed new exhibitions, although it is realised that agreement may take some time and may be conditional. It is also realised that not all iwi may be interested in being represented in Taranaki Museum in New Plymouth as some may feel a closer affiliation with other geographically closer museums. Funding has been allocated by the District Council for the third stage in the 1995/96 financial year and must be completed by June 30 1996. Therefore, while it is important that discussions take place between the Museum and iwi of the region, the deadline must be achieved to ensure the availability of funding.

Stage Three

This Stage covers the European settlement and contemporary history. Episodes will include whalers, the Plymouth Company, European settlement, Missionaries, Early Industry and bringing the story of Taranaki close to the present. Various points of view will be represented on the Land Wars and the invasion of Parihaka, important episodes in the history of Taranaki. Kelvin advised that he envisages that information for Stage Three will be sourced from within the Museum, local historians and other members of the community.

Discussion

While most of the input for Stage One came from within the Museum, iwi from the region are being consulted over plans for displays that are intended to display their taonga and tell their stories.

The case study shows that longer-term exhibitions in Taranaki Museum are planned with a greater degree of formality and documentation than are temporary exhibitions. The use of written exhibition briefs is an example of this. The inclusion of Maori and general community input shows a recognition of the need to involve the community in their representation in the museum galleries. It was intended that public feedback on Stage One be used to improve the planning and design of subsequent Stages. However this was not to take the form a formal exhibition evaluation, and was, instead, to rely on visitor comments and observations of the usage of the exhibition.

4.3 Bert Lett, Exhibitions Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum.

The Case Study

This case study discusses the role of the Exhibitions Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum at the time research was conducted in September 1994.

The views expressed in this case study are not necessarily a reflection of the Museum's current philosophy or practice.

The Setting

Whanganui Regional Museum

Whanganui Regional Museum is administered by the Whanganui Regional Museum Board of Trustees. It also a unit of the Wanganui City Council.

It is situated on the lower level of Queen's Park, Wanganui, near the conference centre and below the Sarjeant Gallery. A large proportion of the Museum is devoted to exhibitions. The ground floor houses the following: the Maori Gallery; Centennial Street, an historical street recreation; a gallery devoted to the works of Gottfried Lindauer; an exhibition of Maori carving; a temporary exhibition gallery; and, in the foyer, a display of Maori waka - "Te Waka Maori". The exhibition galleries on the first floor contain a mixture of historical and natural history exhibitions. However, a large portion of this area has been allocated to the collections management team for the documentation and re-housing of the collections.

The Museum has a permanent staff of six consisting of Director, Registrar, Exhibitions Officer, Curator, Office Manager and Education Officer. There are also two Assistant Registrars working on the collections project and an acting Archivist.

Whanganui Regional Museum: Staff Structure

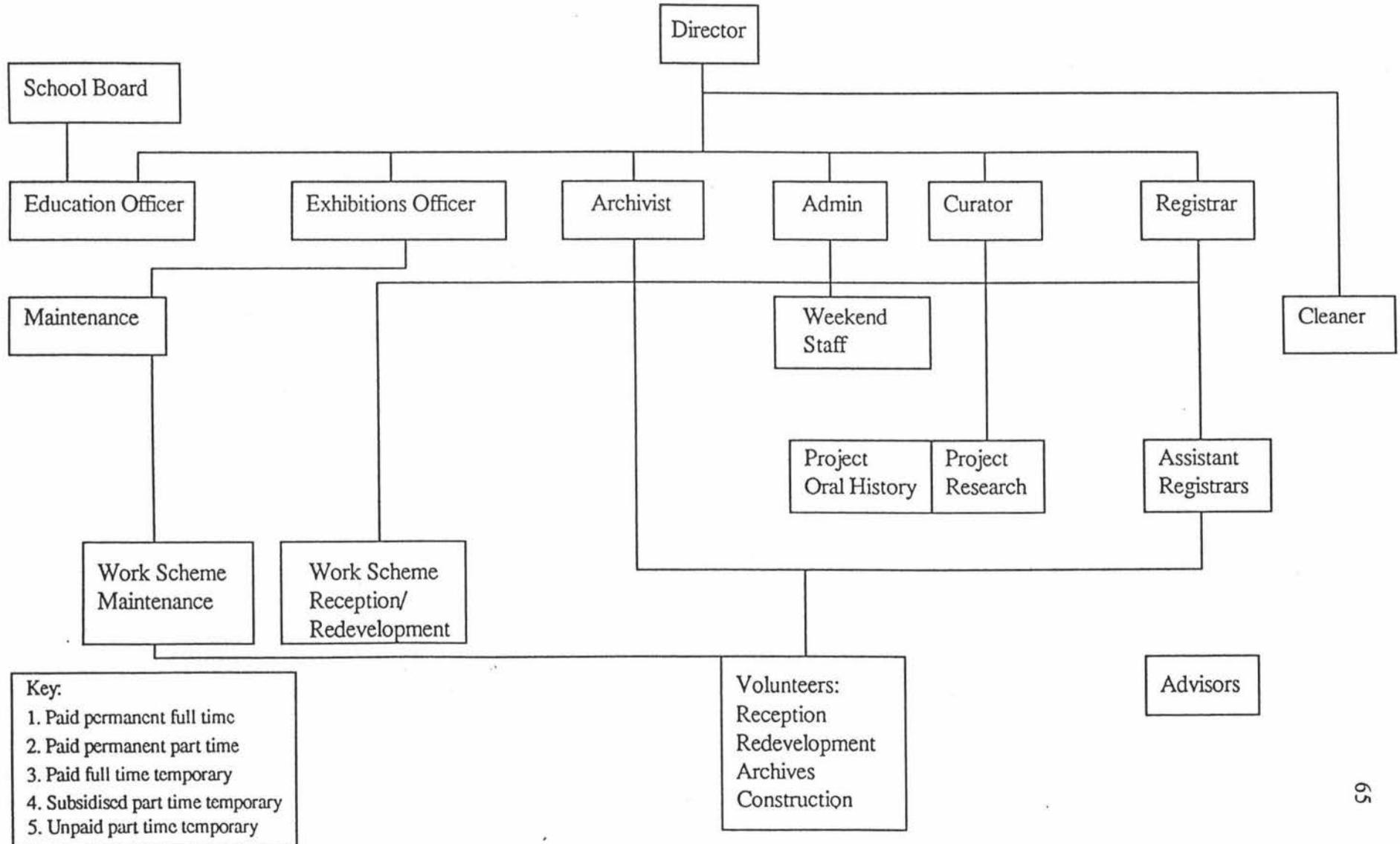


Fig. 3

Source: Whanganui Regional Museum

The Participants

Bert Lett, Exhibitions Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum.

At the time interviews were conducted, Bert Lett had been Exhibitions Officer of Whanganui Regional Museum for eighteen months. Prior to this, his career was in newspaper printing and graphic design. While Bert does not have any professional qualifications or previous museum experience, he thought his typography and graphic design skills made him suitable for the position:

"I did an apprenticeship in printing, Advanced Trade Cert, and learned typography, artwork and publishing. And then went into graphic art. Going into a museum seemed a natural progression. And I could see museum work as important as opposed to advertising."

Bert indicated this was a long-term career move.

Brian Henderson, Director, Whanganui Regional Museum

Brian Henderson was Director of Whanganui Regional Museum for 12 years. He described his role briefly:

"Basically I'm responsible to the Board of Trustees for the day to day running of the Museum. For the administration, management and the overall professional development of the Museum."

Brian Henderson died in November 1994.

Pat Stodart, Curator, Whanganui Regional Museum

At the time interviews were conducted, Pat Stodart was on secondment from Porirua Museum where he is Registrar. He previously worked at Whanganui Regional Museum as an

archaeological site supervisor from 1988-89. At the time of research, Pat had been Temporary Curator of the Museum for seven weeks. He indicated that during his time as Curator at the Museum he would not fulfil all of the Curator's role. Instead he was assigned to specific areas of responsibility such as the development of a centennial exhibition, the relocation of the street recreation and curating temporary exhibitions. He was also to supervise the Archivist in his research duties and the curatorial research assistant. Pat has since returned to Porirua Museum, following the return of the Curator to Whanganui Regional Museum.

The Status of the Exhibitions Officer

The staff structure chart (Fig. 3) shows that Whanganui Regional Museum operates a hierarchical structure with the Director at the top, followed by a single tier for all the permanent full-time staff. This places the position of Exhibitions Officer on the same level as the Education Officer, Curator, Registrar and Office Manager, all of whom report directly to the Director. Other staff such as temporary or part-time staff are on the lower tiers of the organisational chart.

Other factors which affect the "status" of the Exhibition Officer's position within the organisation require examination. Salary levels are one indicator of formal status. A comparison of the salaries between two positions supposedly on the same level of the staff structure, the Exhibitions Officer and Curator, reveals a disparity. For example, the Exhibitions Officer's salary range starts at \$5,000 lower than that of the Curator, and ends where the Curator's salary range begins.

Brian indicated that setting salary levels was quite problematic:

"The difficulty is deciding what training and work experience is relevant. It's very difficult to measure the visual experience. He (Bert) also has no staff responsible to him. But the

City Council system does cause problems for us and I would like to institute a qualitative system. The Curator tends to be Deputy Director as well."

Reference has been made to salary levels having been set using experience and qualifications as a guideline. The salary differential between Bert and the other staff is obviously not so simple that it can be completely to status. Anecdotal evidence may indicate how Bert, Brian and Pat perceive Bert's status in the Museum in the informal sense.

Brian bluntly described Bert's status in the Museum as:

"Not good enough. Because he ends up being the johnny-on-the-spot as far as putting on the overalls and doing the bits and pieces. I feel the staff would see him at the bottom of the pile, not because of salary but because he's the guy with the hammer. I'm sure that would improve if he had more technical support so that he was looked on as a manager..."

Pat related his own view and how he perceived that the staff viewed the Exhibition Officer's status:

"I think I treat him (Bert) as an equal in most cases. He has more status in the areas of design and display. There is a certain amount of resistance to the Exhibition Officer being treated as a museum professional, not so much here, but in other museums where the status is that of a labourer. At staff meetings Bert is treated as an equal, at other times maybe not..."

Bert briefly reflected on how he perceived his own status in the Museum:

"In some ways I've been the handyman, but I've put my foot down about that."

Allied to status is the question of whether an employee was perceived as being a "professional".

Bert gave a qualified answer when I asked if he regarded himself as a "professional":

"Well in the strictest sense I'm not. I don't have a professional qualification; I don't belong to a professional body. But I like to think I do a professional job."

I also asked Bert if he saw himself as member of the wider "museum profession":

"Yes, I guess so, especially as I create more links with other museum staff."

Pat and Brian were less qualified in their assessment of Bert's professionalism or professional status. I asked Pat if he regarded Bert as a museum professional:

"Sure. Certainly his position is that of a museum professional, and he's working towards fulfilling that role. Yes, he's a professional in what he does."

While Bert has no academic qualifications, Pat's comments indicate that "professional" status can be earned through on-the-job performance.

I asked the same question of Brian:

"Yes. We had a talk about this of recent times. But I have endeavoured to get the staff to take the course you're doing or have done. But Exhibition Officers tend to be at a bit of a disadvantage with not having a degree. Many come through polytech. But I think exhibition Officers have to push things along themselves and get together. There are structures which tend to get in the way of Exhibition Officers reaching the top."

Brian also presented a view of the status of museum Exhibition Officers in general:

"Exhibition Officers tend to be the poor relations in the profession. There is no recognised training and they all have different backgrounds. There really is a need to do something about qualifications for Exhibition Officers."

The Role of the Exhibition Officer

The Exhibitions Officer's job description was reviewed for the "institutional point of view" of the role of that position. It should also be noted that the job description provided was a newly-revised version written by Bert, so that it may reflect his perception of his role as much as that of the institution:

"Primary Purpose of the Position:

Responsible for the design and installation of the museum's temporary and permanent exhibitions and general public areas to a level that the public would expect." (Lett, 1994:1).

The job description highlighted responsibilities in the area of exhibition design and installation, publication design, and liaison with Museum staff to ensure that they had input into exhibitions. It also referred to a requirement that the Exhibition Officer assist the Curator in the planning of exhibitions and liaise with the Education Officer and Registrar to ensure exhibitions reflect their areas of concern.

As Director, Brian also represents the institutional point of view of the Exhibition Officer's role in the Museum:

"I thought carefully about that when I drew up his job description. I think it actually says the installation of both temporary and permanent exhibitions. The problem is that there is no set background from which exhibitions staff come from so when you draw up a job description, you end up with people with strengths in particular areas. Bert's background is in two-dimensional design rather than three-dimensional design. So we're looking at how far that design role can go. So that's one of Bert's roles, the design and installation of

exhibitions, but because of his skills he's also moving into working on publications and publicity, such as our newsletter, advertisements, any publications. He's in charge of the workshop - of course he also tends to get the handyman-type jobs. He doesn't have much time to put into the construction of furniture."

He then discussed how his position related to that of Bert's:

"Well, I see Bert as carrying out the exhibition programme. One of the main areas I look at is the amount of time he spends on each job. He carries out publicity, publications and design type functions so my main aim there because the actual work he does in the exhibition tends to be directed to a large extent by the Curator. I guess my main aspect is to do the time allocation."

As Brian explained, the Exhibition Officer's role is dictated to a large extent by a lack of staff resources:

"We've had a number of new staff over the years such as the Curator and Registrar, but we've left the implementation in rather few hands...So his (Bert's) job description would end up with a lot of duties that in another institution would be the responsibility of a technician."

I also asked Bert what he saw as his role in the Museum. He recited from the revised job description, the "Primary Purpose of the Position", adding:

"I guess I should stick to this job description because I've just written it. And doing it in such a way that you follow museum practises such as conservation. But you only spend 30% of your job on exhibitions with all the other bits and pieces. It should be 80%, with 20% bits and pieces."

I asked him about the other responsibilities he had, including those that he considered "bits and pieces":

"Other responsibilities include advertising, publicity, security and maintenance of the exhibition space and the lighting, audio-visual equipment and looking after the workshop and the exhibition preparing area. It's a bit hard to figure where exhibitions start and end. Does it start with the design or with the curatorial side? There are times when you have to assist the Curator or come up with ideas yourself. Why should ideas only come from the Curator?"

When discussing Bert's role, Pat referred to an exercise that was done at a team building workshop for Museum staff. While everyone saw Bert's role firmly in the field of exhibitions, their definition of that role and the qualities needed to fulfil it varied, sometimes quite widely.

Pat also talked about the changes at the Museum:

"Probably at this stage everyone's role is unclear. No one really knows what their job is or has an active job description. Bert's role is pretty fluid, it hasn't been set yet. So as a result, there is conflict all around his job. Like who's responsible for the conservation of objects on display, or even who's responsible for the content of exhibitions. What you'll get out of these interviews is that Bert's job isn't set yet and it's still forming. It's all in flux here."

Exhibition Philosophy

Bert described what he saw as the aim of exhibitions:

"An exhibition should entertain and educate but not necessarily in that order. An exhibition should grab attention; it should be pitched at the average person. You shouldn't have to read too much. I like the way Harvey (Harvey Taylor, former Head of Exhibitions, The Science Centre and Manawatu Museum) does it, moving around and giving a bit of the story as you move around. You've got to strike the balance between entertainment and learning something - everything should bring together the experience to make it enjoyable and

educational. But you also have to get the facts right...Museums need to create links with their community and show themselves and get them talking about themselves."

Exhibition Planning

In this section the participants discuss the ways in which exhibitions are developed and implemented in Whanganui Regional Museum. This shows a major component of the Exhibitions Officer's role in action.

It is important to establish the mechanisms through which exhibition are planned and implemented.

I asked Brian if the Museum had an exhibitions programme:

"We don't have a hard and fast programme. It's something we are looking at the moment. We're running a series of staff training workshops to clearly define an exhibition planning process. It has tended to be fairly ad hoc in the past. In the days of Bert's predecessors we had no Registrar and no Curator and therefore in the past, the Exhibition Officer was the person who generated the exhibition programme in consultation with me. So therefore we are still to finalise a definite programme where the roles are clearly set out."

Interestingly, Brian mentioned the fact that the Exhibition Officer had in the past been responsible for generating the exhibition programme. With the appointment of Curator, it appeared that this position and not that of the Exhibitions Officer had become responsible for the generation of an exhibitions programme.

He also indicated the numbers of exhibitions implemented at three to four per quarter.

With a change to a Curator-generated exhibition programme, Brian described the Curator as having a largest input into the exhibition programme:

"Yes, we've had a programme which has heavily driven by the Curator. Some would say too heavily driven. In terms of the timing of exhibitions, I tend to push that along a little, but in terms of the topic of the exhibition and content, and here I'm talking about temporary exhibitions, in terms of early days for Bert, its Curator-driven. But we've only had a Curator for three years. I'm conscious of the fact that our Registrar and particularly our Education Officer would like to have more input. He's school-based so the input he's been trying to secure is touring exhibitions that would suit his programme. And then there's a door charge. Public support is a key element of course in temporary exhibitions."

His comments illustrate the Curator's role in bringing the exhibition programme together as the staff member who is the "driver" of the exhibition programme. This information is important to the latter discussion of the role of the Exhibitions Officer. Brian's comments also echoed those of Bert who indicated a desire to be involved in generating ideas for exhibitions.

With this in mind, I wanted to find out if staff had some way of being involved in exhibition planning.

I asked Brian if planning meetings were held for exhibitions:

"No, we're in transition at the moment between exhibitions that have been generated by one person to a situation where a number of people have had input into it. We're looking closely at the moment at which activities need to be team-driven and which can simply be run by one particular person."

He also discussed how Bert's role in the exhibition programme may expand:

"He's been here about 12 months now and came from a non-museum background. He started having very little input in that, but that role is expanding. He's having an increased role in the exhibition programme. I think that what we still have to decide how much further that role should extend before other staff start to feel he's encroaching on their area."

I asked Bert if he had any involvement in planning the exhibitions programme:

"We're still developing our procedures, but, yes, I get involved in that."

However he thought there needed to be some changes:

"We make a big mistake in museums just allowing one or two people to come up with ideas. It's the idea that's important, not who comes up with it. We all need to be able to bring ideas to staff meetings and talk about it. It shouldn't get to the stage where it's a long way down the track and someone comes up with reasons why you can't do it. We need to talk about it before then. There's no point the Curator and Exhibition Officer developing an exhibition to find out it's no good for the Education Officer or the Registrar says the objects aren't in any condition for display."

Carrying on from Bert's desire to be able to make more of a contribution to the generation of exhibitions, I asked him if he thought he was adequately consulted by Museum staff:

"No, definitely not. It's just the way people are. Maybe it's personality or agendas. I didn't find out till 4:30 on Friday that we were fumigating on Sunday when I had planned to work. But I think we're moving towards a team-based approach. But there are still problems to be ironed out. I think the Exhibition Officer should be able to look at what the Curator presented academically and turn it into layman's language."

While most of his comments speak for themselves, it is also worth noting Bert's final comment and relating that back to the role of his position. Velarde (1992:663-664) also describes one of the Designer's roles as making the Curator's message intelligible for the audience. If this is so, then trust and teamwork between the Exhibitions Officer and Curator is important.

Bert discussed the importance of good personal relationships to teamwork:

"Having good personal relationships are important to team-building. But what say you don't get on with each other. It is important like sitting down talking about things with Pat. He listens to what I say and I listen to what he says."

I also discussed how the exhibition planning process with Pat. His description also illustrated working relationships:

"Because we're in the throes of re-housing the collection and redeveloping permanent exhibitions, we've decided not to develop our own temporary exhibitions. Instead we've taken an Exhibitour exhibition, Michelle Moir's fifty photographs of contemporary Maori women. And then arranging for it's installation - I'm supposed to assist Bert on that. What this means is that we have to work out how our roles intermesh. All that needs to be done is give the galleries a coat of paint, but I think the decision should be Bert's. I'll help him and give him advice on cultural matters. Then there's publicity. Bert does the design and arranges for the printing. And I'll liaise with Michelle on her book launch here. Then there's the Pacific collection which needs to be registered, cleaned and rehoused. Because I have archaeological and curatorial experience in that area I'm to have an overview of it. Kate and I will get together to decide what an overview is. Then there's the missionary display. I'll have to liaise with Kate on the artefacts, get them out and write the text. And then between Bert and I, we have to mount the exhibition in the case. But it's pretty much up to Bert how he wants to display it. I'll write the labels, but Chris (Education) and Alistair (Archivist) will have some input into those. And Brian and Bert will be involved. The Curator is the one who is there to interpret history to the public with the assistance of others. We've just been going through these Bob Dempsey workshops and at this stage everyone's role is undefined."

Pat explained that while formal briefs were not developed, there was some discussion of the requirements of the requirements and deadlines for an exhibition:

"There is usually something that comes out of a staff meeting - a few lines. After that its pretty informal. There's always a queue at my office door in the mornings and Bert is always at the front of the queue. And the exhibitions are the topic. We have discussed them with other staff in the Boardroom, but Bert and I tend to get this settled before we go and see anyone else. We take notes about what we need to do. Deadlines are set by the staff as to when exhibitions should be up and running. So everyone knows what the deadline is."

While a written brief may sometimes be prepared for an exhibition in Whanganui Regional Museum, Bert indicated that information is usually conveyed verbally. He explained why he thought a more formal briefing process would be a useful:

"If we functioned as a team we could prepare the brief together. It would be good to get it on paper so we know what we've decided. It's too easy to deviate over time. In some ways the Exhibition Officers should be team leader as it's our responsibility to get things into the gallery."

His last comment presents a challenge to curatorial authority, expressing the point of view of a staff member who also wants a role in leading the exhibitions from inception to their completion in the galleries.

Design is also an important part of the exhibition process. Bert indicated that he had a target audience in mind when preparing a design:

"I try to have a target audience in mind. Like "Lives on Tape", the Women's Suffrage exhibition, and Nga Waka Maori - lots of Maori visitors, so I target it for the Maori community. People come in from all walks of life, but it's important to keep interest groups in mind."

I asked if particular audiences made much difference to the content and style of an exhibition:

"Yes, that's important. You should think of your story before you do anything else rather than basing your exhibition on objects. Objects mean nothing unless you can tell a story about them. I guess I haven't got a lot of experience to draw on. I've only got to grips with what my job is in the last six months. But I really had no understanding of Maori culture let alone the language, so that's something I have to come to grips with - there's another thing. There are just so many things to learn."

Resources

Adequate resources are important to the fulfilment of the exhibition programme. These may consist of equipment for design and installation, funding and labour.

I asked Bert if the Exhibitions department was adequately resourced:

"We've got a pretty good workshop as far as machinery and tools go. Labour, no, not enough - we have never had enough of that. The ideal situation would be to have an Exhibitions Officer and a Technician. That's what you really need in a museum this size. I had a work-scheme guy for six months and that worked really well. I think the level of exhibitions would rise if we had more staff, then I'd have more time for planning and developing ideas. The design stage is the most important to getting it right, and having time for consultation."

Pat agreed with Bert on his summation of resource levels:

"To do what I expect of him he has sufficient money and equipment, but the two things he lacks are physical space to do it and things could be improved by the input of more labour. He could do much more, but the expectations would go up if these two were improved. What

he expects to achieve, he can't do it with what he's got. And he sets himself high standards, whereas we expect it to be good rather than perfect."

Brian also indicated resource levels were a problem:

"There is enough money for temporary exhibitions but we need more for maintenance and long-term exhibitions. Exhibitions do not have enough staff resources or enough equipment. All the assistance they have is a few hours a week for a carpenter."

Standards and Feedback

As the Curator indicated, quality can be affected by resource levels, but it is also important to set standards for the presentation of exhibitions. This section discusses how quality standards are set and what feedback the Exhibitions Officer receives on how well these standards are met.

I asked Brian if he set standards for Bert to achieve in exhibitions:

"That's a difficult one. The answer to that one is, probably, no. What we're trying to do is set standards over all for the museum. But most of the standards that are set at the moment are quantitative rather than qualitative."

Having no set standards, was there was any system for monitoring Bert's performance?

"No, none of us have. It's something I've been trying to push the Board along - they don't have a monitoring system for me. Because our relationship with the Council tends to be distant, we have not been taken on board when they upgraded their monitoring system a couple of years ago. I'll have to look around for something better and do something about it. For exhibitions we have to look at quality too, not just if deadlines were met."

With no formal monitoring system, it is vital that the Exhibitions Officer received feedback on his work in some form. I asked Brian if he thought he gave Bert enough feedback on the standard of his work:

"I think this is probably the biggest difficulty I face as a Director. I don't know whether I do. I would suspect the staff don't get enough feedback. It's difficult to know what's the best form for each staff member."

Exhibition standards are not explicitly stated by the Museum. Instead, Bert indicated that the standards he adhered to were his own:

"The standards are really my own personal standards. I like to see things finished off to a really high level. But I've had criticism that it takes too long and I need to compromise to get them up quicker. But I don't like doing that. I like to do it properly. Then there are general museum standards. Kate (Registrar) talks a lot about professionalism. So that's good in a way, it's helped to introduce that thinking of professional excellence. But it doesn't really come from the Museum as such. We also see what other museums are doing - going to workshops. But the Museum set it up that way so we can learn."

I asked if he made changes for following exhibitions following this self-evaluation:

"Yes, definitely. I always try to stand back and look at something. And then look at it the next morning. You've got to evaluate otherwise you're running blind."

Bert gave me an example of some exhibitions changed as result of feedback from others and his own evaluation:

"That Nga Waka Maori exhibition is a classic. It was a bit frustrating because it came from one person. I made some changes when Pat came along - we changed the labels, gave more information about the waka, why they are here, and made it visually more interesting. We've

had some great feedback from that. We didn't get together at the start - lack of team work or a common goal."

If teamwork was a problem were museum staff keen to move towards a team approach?

"Yes, definitely. Once we've got it set up people can slot in as staff come and go. The biggest thing with teamwork is communication - people need to be able to listen. I want to operate that way. I appreciate other people's input so everyone can be happy."

Bert indicated that while most of the staff feedback consisted of elements they did not like, he could see how they could become more positive by being involved in the planning process:

"Brian doesn't say much, unless he gets comments from other people and passes them on. But you get them from staff, especially if they are not happy. But that comes from the old system where they had no input. They are going to look for faults if they have no ownership of it. It makes you feel like you've made a real stuff up. But when the public come and someone says "Hey, that's really great", that's what counts - it's for them. If you can initiate consultation, then the staff will have a stake in it and be more supportive."

Pat also discussed the feedback he gave Bert on the completion of an exhibition:

"The only thing he's completed since I've been here was the case up by the waka. It turned out he was right about the colours and the use of laser copy of the photograph rather than a photographic print. I told him I was wrong. If it hadn't worked I would have said so, but hopefully, tactfully. He has given me feedback on my label writing. We need to have ongoing feedback, and maybe another thing I need to do is give him some feedback on a few things that are getting behind. But it's not my job to tell him what his job is. We're on the same level."

Having looked at standards, I asked Bert if he "pre-tested" exhibitions before they opened:

"No, you could freak-out if you did that. If it was an hour to opening and someone came in and said they hated it what could you do about it?"

If exhibitions weren't "pre-tested" or formative evaluation applied to their development, were exhibitions evaluated after they were finished:

"No, not as such. Just staff criticism, not a formal evaluation system. But I'm trying to build that into our revamp of the colonial street. You've always got to try to put yourself in the public's position. It's a brain strain!"

Bert also indicated that he received a lot of satisfaction from his work:

"Yes, unless I'm not happy with the way it looks. I like colours, I'm an intuitive sort of person - I do things intuitively, creating an environment with colour and feeling it and being pleased with it and knowing the content is good and people are happy with it."

Training

As Exhibition Officers seem to come from a variety of backgrounds, it was interesting to find out what training they have and are likely to receive in the future as museum employees.

Brian described the formal and on-job training Bert had undertaken:

"Very little formal training. The Board has a policy to encourage training, including taking six months to see other's museums. Bert has done that. The other side of training is time off to do the Massey course, but he's opted not to do that. He's been to the odd workshop. I don't think there's a lot available in that field."

The criteria he used approving training courses for staff such as Bert were discussed:

"One, do we know about it and two, does he want to go? That's what it boils down to. Another is cost, and if he's got the time. And is the course relevant?"

While Brian indicated that the Trust Board had a policy to encourage training, Bert indicated that he had not had many training opportunities during his employment at the Museum:

"Very minimal. I've been to some workshops in object handling and conservation. And I haven't been to a workshop where they cover design and display techniques."

He discussed the training he would like:

"A basic course in museums generally - basic functions, design and exhibitions."

While Bert indicated that he would like training beyond the practicalities of his job, including a basic grounding in the function of museums, he felt doubtful about doing the Diploma in Museum Studies for a number of reasons:

"Well, I've only been in museums for eighteen months. I'm just starting to feel more confident about what I'm doing and I'm just starting to decide for myself what I'm doing. Basically I'm a museum person who doesn't have much academic training. It's difficult time-wise to study the Diploma. I've got too many commitments here and outside."

Since the time this research was completed, Sharon Dell has been appointed as Director of Whanganui Regional Museum. Michelle Horwood has returned from her assignment with the Museum of New Zealand and has resumed work as Curator.

4.4 Jolene Douglas, Exhibition Officer, Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre.

The Case Study

This case study is a representation of the position of Exhibition Officer at the time research was conducted in November 1994.

The Setting

Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre

Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre is located across the river from Gisborne's business district. It comprises the main museum building, a separate maritime museum and four colonial buildings, one of which houses an arts and crafts studio. The Museum and Arts Centre is administered by the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre (Inc.) through the Executive Committee of the Museum Council. The main building houses two temporary exhibition galleries which are used for the changing arts programme, two museum galleries, one of which is used for historical exhibitions, the other "Te Whare Taonga" being allocated to taonga of the tangata whenua and the Education Wing which is used for schools and other group visits. Staff offices are also located in the main Museum building.

The Museum's collection includes Maori and European artefacts which relate to the region, geological and natural history specimens, and various artworks with an emphasis on local artists.

At the time research was conducted two art exhibitions were on display: "Toihoukura", a selection of works from the Tairāwhiti Polytechnic's Maori Art course, and water-colours by a local artist. The gallery "Te Whare Taonga" was being repainted, while in the general museum gallery, an historical display of toys was being installed.

Staff positions at this time were Director, Exhibition Officer, Registrar, Administration Officer, Curator of History, Information Officer, Education Officer, Maintenance and Security Officer, plus a Photographer employed on a special project.

The Participants:

Jolene Douglas, Exhibition Officer

Jolene Douglas' first contact with the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre was as an exhibitor of her own art works. In 1989 she came onto the staff as a part-time Assistant Exhibition Officer. In December 1993 she took over as Exhibition Officer on a full-time basis.

"I was asked to fill in and it's gone from there."

However no replacement was provided for her former position as Assistant Exhibition Officer. As well as being a museum Exhibition Officer, Jolene is an artist. She sees this as an asset to her current position:

"I'm not qualified, but I have the experience. Having an art background gives me the visual sense needed and that's important."

Jolene's ultimate goal is to paint full-time, although she conceded that may have to wait until her retirement.

Priscilla Thompson, Director.

At the time research interviews were conducted, Priscilla Thompson was Director of Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre. Since then she has been appointed to the position of Exhibitions Manager, Auckland Museum.

Priscilla was Director of Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre for eighteen months prior to taking up her new appointment. Her career also included two and a half years as Executive Director of the Auckland Society of Arts, six years as Exhibitions Officer at Auckland City Art Gallery and two years as Exhibitions Manager of the same institution.

She described her role in the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre:

"It's largely administrative with some curatorial content. But mainly it's overseeing the combined institution of Museum and Arts Centre."

Mike Spedding, Curator of History.

Mike Spedding has been employed at the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre for two years. He was originally employed as an Archivist, but the role had changed, he said, to include more curatorial content:

"In the last 12 months I would have curated 6 exhibitions, drawing largely on the photographic archive."

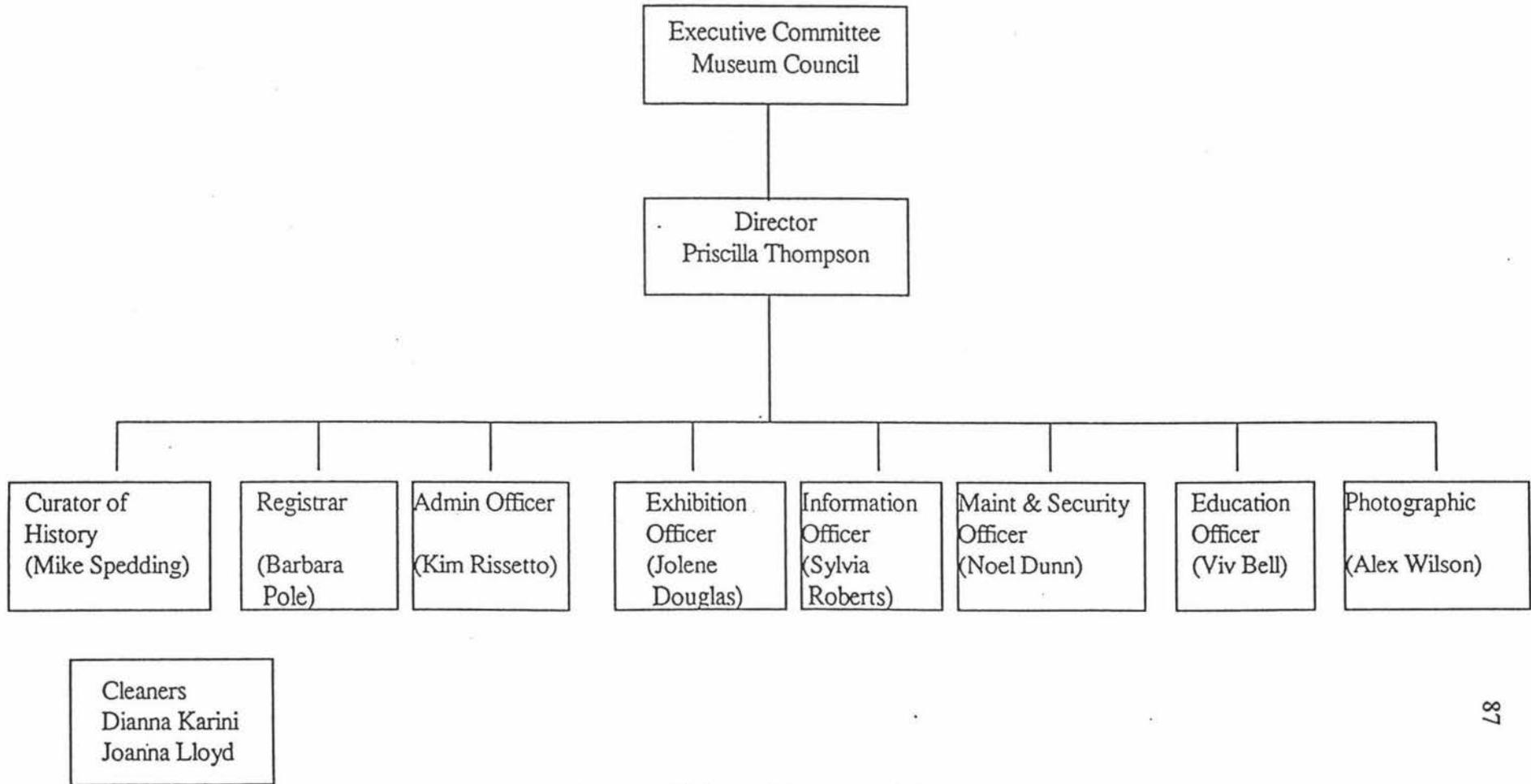
He is responsible for a number of collections, an oral archive, a photographic archive, maps and plans, a reference library, vertical files and archives.

"My role is the responsibility for these collections, their conservation and interpretation."

The Status of the Exhibition Officer

As shown in the staff structure chart (Fig. 4), Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre operates a "flat" structure under the level of Director: all staff are responsible to the Director. Therefore the Exhibition Officer is on the same level in the organisational structure as all other staff of this institution.

Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre
Staff Structure



Source: Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre

The Exhibition Officer has no staff responsibilities apart from volunteer help and any part-time assistance that may be provided from time to time.

A discussion of the “status” of the Exhibition Officer, both formal and informal, provides a wider context for the examination of her place in the organisational structure and her role in the organisation. In addition to placement within the staff structure, salary relativity is also an important indicator of formal status. One also needs to discuss how the Exhibition Officer and her colleagues view her status within the organisation. This form of status could be partly due to the position and partly due to Jolene’s performance.

The Exhibition Officer, Jolene Douglas, felt that she was of an equivalent status to most of the Museum's staff, but expressed some concerns about the low level of her salary. The Director, Priscilla Thompson, stressed that Jolene's status within the Museum was very high. However, she also noted the inconsistencies between what the Trust Board stated as Jolene's importance to the Museum, and what the Board were willing to pay her:

"I came from an institution where Curators were paid more than anyone else. In a place like this she's seen as having fairly high status, but it's not always reflected in her salary.."

Priscilla explained that the Curator of History, who has a degree, earns \$4,000 more than the Exhibition Officer. However, she will be getting an increment to take her within \$2,000 of his salary. She continued:

"... She's valued very highly by the staff here and the Trust Board - she's seen as the public face of the museum. But I say to them if you value her so highly give her a pay rise."

Although he earns more than Jolene, the Mike did not see any difference in status between his position and that of Jolene:

"We're ruled by an Executive, with our Director as our representative. From there we go to distinct groups, as I see it; Administration, Curatorial, Registration and Exhibitions. I would put Jolene on an even par with myself and the Registrar."

He also acknowledged Jolene as a "museum professional" and indicated he had learned great deal from her.

In addition to her duties in the design and installation of exhibitions, Jolene is also clearly the curator of most, if not all, of the institution's art exhibitions. However, it is possible that this role goes largely unrecognised by the Museum and Arts Centre's Trust Board and, therefore, unrewarded. Thus it could be said that the Exhibition Officer's formal status, as evidenced by her salary, is not commensurate with her high informal status.

The Role of the Exhibition Officer:

"This is what people see first, the job I do" - Jolene Douglas.

I was unable to obtain a copy of the Exhibition Officer's job description. However the Director gave her view of the Exhibition Officer's role, which could be said to represent the institutional point of view:

"She's very much the driver of the exhibitions programme. She is thus the driver of one of the major public faces of the museum - of the whole institution. Her role goes right back to generating exhibitions, keeping in touch with the community and colleagues around the country. She keeps in touch with the Exhibitours of this world and administers the incoming and outgoing of exhibitions and she's responsible for the publicity and design of exhibitions and their physical installation, she handles exhibition openings. She also keeps in touch with both cultures."

Priscilla highlighted the importance of Jolene's role in the Museum as the "driver" of the exhibition programme. Her links to the Maori community are important to the Museum, as Maori comprise nearly 40% of the region's population (Statistics New Zealand, 1994:84, 133). Jolene's major iwi lines are Ngati Maru and Ngati Raukawa and is connected to Te Arawa through marriage.

Jolene summarised the role of her position as "*putting the public face on the museum.*" As exhibitions form the principal experience the public have of museums, this is very much a case of the end result of her job (the finished exhibitions) providing the interface between the Museum and the public. The main responsibilities of her position, as she saw them, were "*front of house, design and installation.*" This involves her own input in the design and installation of exhibitions. In addition to the Museum galleries, Jolene is responsible for the display case in the entranceway. While she performs a wide range of duties, she acknowledged the contributions of the Museum staff in assisting her with the installation of exhibitions.

When talking to Jolene between interview sessions, it was also apparent that she was very much the interface between the Museum and its exhibitors. She showed me forms that were used for inviting artists to exhibit and also agreement forms used between the Museum and Exhibitors (Appendix 4). Her links to the local artistic community and beyond not only gave her contacts with potential exhibitors, but knowledge of their work, both valuable attributes in her position as curator of the institution's art exhibitions.

Mike saw Jolene's role as pivotal to the museum's exhibitions:

"Primarily her role is to co-ordinate the exhibition programme, make sure it happens, liaise with the people who are exhibiting here, to play that role with exhibitions that are curated in-house. Also there are several things that require people to work together and we all have a role in that - being part of the team overall in the museum."

It is also important to ascertain if Jolene's job description adequately covered the range of her position. Priscilla explained that it didn't:

"She has a somewhat old-fashioned job-description. We're moving towards a more results-oriented format. She does have a job description. It's probably not adequate but I'm meant to be writing another one."

Jolene had no knowledge of a written job description (it may have been written before she became Exhibition Officer) for her position and indicated that she may have to prepare one herself.

Jolene's role is diverse, and it could be said that she occupies many roles. She is at various times curator of art exhibitions, designer, installation technician, team member and co-curator of at least one history exhibition. She sustains links between the Museum and the community by providing the institution with a range of exhibitions for the public, acting as liaison between the Museum and exhibitors, many of whom are local artists, and also providing links to the Maori community.

Exhibition Philosophy

Jolene saw exhibitions as an important link between the museum and the community:

"It gets people in; schools, polytechs, groups, and they are regular. It's a really, really important source of communication."

As Curator of History, Mike is involved in the development of historical exhibitions. He talked about how he saw exhibitions:

"They operate on a number of levels. There is one that's purely pleasurable to look at; as a means of imparting information, interpreting history through the collection and all of the

above. There are those which operate on a number of levels, including enjoyment and entertainment."

Exhibition Planning

The "museum" galleries have approximately six exhibitions per year whereas the art galleries and foyer have thirty-eight exhibitions and displays per year. These shows come from outside the museum, many from artists known to Jolene in her capacity as an artist, and as a member of a number of arts organisations such as Matapuna (Maori Visual Artists of Aotearoa), Gisborne Community Arts Council and Nga Puna Waihanganga ki Tairāwhiti.

The presentation of such a high number of exhibitions requires a great deal of organisation. Jolene explained how she organised the exhibition programme through long-term planning:

"I have the calendars up here (on the wall) and work two to three years at a time..."

Whereas the exhibitions programmes for many institutions are Curator-driven, Mike has input only into the small number of internally-generated exhibitions. This reinforces Jolene's role as "curator" in addition to her many other tasks associated with the design and installation of exhibitions.

While each staff member may have their assigned areas, it is important that staff be flexible enough to assist others during peak periods. This is especially applicable to exhibition installation in the instances where there is only a single staff member dedicated to exhibition functions.

Jolene explained how she worked with other staff members when implementing an exhibition:

"They assist when they have a free moment... They ask if I need help and at other times I ask."

While Jolene curates many exhibitions in the temporary art galleries, she also designs exhibitions for that area. In designing an exhibition it is important that the design take into account the needs of the target audience:

"If I do a primary schools exhibition...you think what eye level is for them and hang accordingly."

While it is clear that Jolene is the initiator of most art exhibitions, there is also some indication that the Curator of History has a growing involvement in exhibitions in the designated "museum" galleries. Mike explained how he saw his working relationship with Jolene:

"We work together more now than previously. As I become more involved in exhibitions, there is more overlap, but Jolene is still responsible for exhibitions design. I might help her with matting and framing and we're working together on a project - maybe help her put things up when time's getting short."

Using the proposed social history exhibition of the East Coast as an example, he explained how he conveys ideas and concepts for an exhibition to her:

"I would just charge into her office and interrupt what she was doing! But with what we're working on now, we meet regularly, but it's more informal. Communication is easy. We file away ideas and letters. We've written an outline already and eventually we'll write a brief."

While the general approach to exhibitions is quite informal, on occasion the level of formality may increase to include formal documentation such as a brief for a long-term exhibition.

Resources

Jolene plans and implements around thirty-eight art exhibitions and small displays a year, plus a small number of historical exhibitions. With such a high output, adequacy of resources is critical. Priscilla explained that a lack of funding had affected the quality of materials used in the exhibition galleries. For example until quite recently there were no funds available for basic materials such as foam board for labels, and galleries had to stay with the same paint scheme for a number of years. She indicated that when she arrived at the Museum the budget for exhibitions was around \$8,000 per annum and rose to \$20,000 per annum while she was Director. This meant that better quality materials could now be purchased.

She also indicated that Jolene was in need of staff assistance. Jolene's previous position as part-time Assistant Exhibition Officer had not been replaced, and Priscilla was sure that this put far too much pressure on Jolene. She also felt Jolene put pressure on herself to cope with minimal assistance. There has been some temporary assistance available in the past, and Jolene's daughters have also assisted with exhibition installation. However, Jolene indicated that that her resource level, including staffing, was quite adequate for her to fulfil the exhibition function in the Museum.

Standards and Feedback

In having such an important role to play in the relationship between the museum and the public, one would expect that standards would be set by the Museum for the Exhibition Officer to achieve. However as Priscilla explained the exhibition standards are set by Jolene:

"She's used to doing things on a shoestring. Her standards are her own high standards...Having Maori staff brings in a new set of standards in handling taonga."

Priscilla's comments relate to her previous remarks on a lack of resources. Maintaining high standards with low quality materials is difficult. In addition, her comments indicate that

having Jolene on staff assisted the Museum in handling taonga in a culturally appropriate manner.

Jolene largely sets her own standards. Priscilla explained how she monitored Jolene's performance:

"I don't, strictly, in marking off what she does. I would go and spend a morning with her and have a chat about things. She wouldn't tell me if she needed help. I have to keep an eye on that. She's not the sort of person who needs monitoring, but I have my own idiosyncratic way of doing it."

This reflects the informal style of staff relations and management at Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre. Clearly Jolene has a great deal of autonomy. However, her Director felt she needed to ensure Jolene did not take on too much without some staff support.

Having set her own standards, it is critical that the Exhibition Officer receives considerable feedback on the success or otherwise of her work. Jolene explained:

"Sometimes I get good feedback, sometimes I don't. Generally it's good but sometimes it can be upsetting. You can get annoyed. You remember the one negative comment and forget all the positive ones. And people have the right to say what they like."

I asked Priscilla if she thought it was important that Jolene received a great deal of feedback:

"Oh, yes. She gets told every time when she finishes an exhibition. Once she's done something it looks so nice. Everyone shrieks and celebrates. I think she gets a lot of appreciation for what she does. She does it so much in her own terms. Everyone sees it as a 'Jolene show'."

Jolene herself felt that she received recognition for her work:

"Generally the staff are very supportive and encouraging - the public too."

While Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre do not conduct formal evaluation of their exhibitions, informal feedback from staff and the public will give the Exhibition Officer some indication of the success of the exhibition.

Training

Jolene has no professional qualifications but learned many of her work skills as the assistant to the previous Exhibition Officer, John Walsh.

Priscilla explained how Jolene developed her skills:

"She hasn't done any formal training as such. She was John Walsh's assistant, so she learned the practical bits of the job. That would have been her training. She's developed as an artist over the years. When John left she was the obvious person to take over. Again it's a case of learning on the job. But she's started going on visits to other museum... We're a bit isolated here so we need to get away and see what's happening. We can also bring people here like Mark Strange's photographic course where we played host to our colleagues from other museums."

Jolene also stressed the experience she had gained on the job as well as the importance of her art background:

"I'm not qualified but I have the experience. Having an artistic background gives me the visual sense needed and that's important."

She discussed the training opportunities available to her:

"Visiting other museums, other galleries. Travelling around, getting to know other artists. Comparing exhibitions. Being an artist, you find out what other artists think about aspects of exhibiting."

She indicated also indicated she would attend the Exhibitions Group Aotearoa New Zealand seminar in Wellington in March, 1995. This will be an opportunity to network with other exhibitions staff. Jolene planned further visits to other museums in 1995. She visited The Rotorua Museum of Art and History in 1994 to see "The Daughters of the Land" exhibition as an aid to developing the social history exhibition of the East Coast scheduled to open in 1995.

While the range of training available to Jolene appears to be somewhat limited in scope, she appeared to feel this was quite adequate, emphasising the acquisition and practice of practical skills rather than formal academic learning.

Since the commencement of this research, the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre has undergone a number of changes. Priscilla Thompson has been replaced by Greg McManus as Director. A staff reorganisation has taken place. Jolene's position has been re-designated as "Curator of Art", with an increase in salary. However her duties remain largely unchanged. With an increase in historical exhibitions she now has a closer working relationship with the Curator of History. While she still has the assistance of the current Museum staff and volunteers, a designated assistant has not been employed to replace the former position of Assistant Exhibition Officer.

CHAPTER FIVE

CROSS-CASE COMPARISON

The Role of Exhibition Officers in Regional Museums

The Literature Review (Chapter Two) found little material which discussed the role of Exhibition Officers. Of most relevance was Belcher's (1991:78-79) description of the roles of a number of staff positions who may comprise part of an exhibitions team. These positions are: The designer (exhibition), the designer (graphics), production staff, and maintenance staff and are deemed to be individual roles. However, the case studies show that the Exhibition Officers' job content encompasses these roles. Perhaps one should be writing of the *roles* of the Exhibition Officers rather than their singular *role*.

Nevertheless, Jolene Douglas, (Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre) clearly articulated what she sees as *the* role of her position:

"putting the public face on the museum". (Douglas, 1994).

This definition encompasses the wide range of duties she performs as the presenter of exhibitions, which includes the design and installation of exhibitions, curation of her institution's art exhibitions. From the perspective of larger museums, with more specialised staff, these may be seen as three roles: that of designer, installation technician, and curator. All four case studies indicate that it is this multi-faceted role, the presentation of exhibitions, that is the unifying core of Exhibition Officers' jobs. This enables them to be classified as a distinct occupational group.

The case studies discussed the functions carried out by the four Exhibition Officers. The functions of exhibition design and installation, design and administration of public programmes, the design and production of publicity are performed by all the participant

Exhibition Officers. The case studies also show that Exhibition Officers perform a diverse range of duties, some of which extend into areas defined in the Literature Review (Chapter Two) as “curatorial” (Van Mensch, 1989:24-25; Danilov, 1994, 52-53). Some of the “curatorial” functions performed by the Exhibition Officers include initiating exhibitions, programming exhibitions, (Margaret Cranwell, and Jolene Douglas), curation of exhibitions (the former staff plus some curation by Lisa Stachurski), and writing label text (all the Exhibition Officers). In addition, three of the four Exhibition Officers (Margaret Cranwell, Jolene Douglas and Lisa Stachurski) were shown to carry out at least some research on the exhibitions on which they are working. Margaret Cranwell also has responsibilities for gaining sponsorship for exhibitions and public programmes in her institution.

The extent of the Exhibitions Officers’ roles varies. The role of the Exhibition Officer, Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre, appears to enjoy the most autonomy in the exhibitions function in the development, curation and implementation of that institution's temporary art exhibition programme. The Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum, also has a high degree of autonomy in the development and curation of her institution's exhibition programme, but works with her Curator on collection-based exhibitions. The roles of the Exhibition Officers of Taranaki and Whanganui Museums are more bounded, being largely confined to design and installation. However, like the others they also have functions outside the exhibitions area, such as the design of publicity material and catalogues, some research and writing labels.

The Implementation of Roles - Exhibition Planning

In the preceding section, it was apparent that the main focus of these roles was the design and installation of exhibitions. In two of the four case studies, the curation of exhibitions also featured strongly. This section examines how these roles are implemented through an examination of exhibition planning in the four case study institutions.

The previous section showed that the roles of the Exhibition Officers of Taranaki and Whanganui are similar. The implementation of these roles is also similar. The Programme

Co-ordinator and the Curator of these institutions, respectively, act in the traditional role of curators in the generation, planning and research of exhibition topics. Their requirements are discussed with their respective Exhibition Officer, who is then expected to produce a design that is sympathetic to the curatorial concept. Close verbal communication between the two facilitates this.

The roles of the Exhibition Officers of Hawke's Bay Museum and Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre are somewhat broader. In addition to design and installation functions, they also have curatorial responsibilities. The Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum, curates many of the temporary touring art exhibitions or temporary art exhibitions from the local region, while collection-based exhibitions are the responsibility of the Curator of Trust Collections. Where exhibitions have been generated by the Curator, the discussion is close and informal. While research and other information may be documented in writing, there is a reliance on verbal communication between Curator and Exhibition Officer during the design phase of an exhibition. Jolene Douglas generates the programme of the temporary art exhibitions which form most of Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre's exhibition programme. There have been comparatively few historical exhibitions to date. Those that have been exhibited, have been organised through verbal discussion between the Curator of History and the Exhibition Officer, rather than through written briefs. This close verbal communication has enabled the Exhibition Officer to commence design with minimal formality and documentation.

Close and informal communication between the Exhibition Officers and Curators is the result of a mutual respect for and an understanding of each other's roles. That Curators equated the competence of their Exhibition Officers with "professional" status is a reinforcement of this assertion. The case studies also show that good working and personal relationships facilitate teamwork between Exhibition Officers and Curators. It is doubtful that a use of a written brief only would achieve the close level of communication which the participants stressed as being vital to the success of an exhibition. A highly-formalised process can only set limits on the discussion of ideas generated during the planning of an exhibition.

The processes used or proposed for use in the planning of long-term exhibitions indicate a higher level of formality than that used in the planning of short-term exhibitions. In Taranaki museum where new long-term exhibitions are planned, a brief was prepared by the Programme Co-ordinator for the Exhibition Officer to communicate information on interpretation and content of the exhibitions. The Curators of the other institutions also indicated that they will prepare a written briefs for their planned new exhibitions.

There has been some criticism of the briefing process, whether verbal or written. The Exhibitions Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum expressed his concerns over what he perceived as the weakness of the current verbal briefing process for temporary exhibitions. He explained that as the Museum was trying to move more towards a team-based approach to exhibitions, the use a written brief would be of advantage in recording the agreement of staff to exhibition topics and content. Wizevich (1993) highlights those cases where briefs are documented but are not followed due to hidden agendas by members of the exhibition team. Briefs should not be regarded as some sort of panacea for exhibition ills, including poor communication.

Another weakness of a total reliance on the use of informal verbal communication is the lack of archival documentation of the exhibitions function in museums. Museums must document their activities as a resource for staff to draw on for future exhibitions and as an historical record of the museum's activities.

Exhibition planning may involve a number of staff, who may be described as an "exhibition team." Belcher (1991:78-79) stresses the importance of team-based planning for the co-ordination of resources and responsibilities. In the four participating institutions only one "exhibition planning team" was formally constituted (that of Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre for the social history exhibition only). Staff must be willing to cross boundaries to assist one another, for example with exhibition installation where the Exhibition Officer has no assistant. In such instances, teams are informally constituted. In some cases exhibition planning teams may consist of the Curator and Exhibition Officer, for example in the discussion of how a concept may be implemented. In doing so a partnership or "team" has

been informally constituted. In summary, while the formation of multi-disciplinary teams in the regional museums of this study is largely untried, teamwork is important in the realisation of exhibition concepts in those museums where Exhibition Officer and Curator's role complement each other in the exhibitions function.

All the case study museums appear to have an institutional culture of informality. As such, the formal constitution of exhibition teams may be seen as being overly bureaucratic. This informality may give these museums the flexibility for other staff to cross the boundaries of their roles to assist the Exhibitions Officer. Thus teams may be informally constituted by the provision of assistance for a specific project or period of time.

Limitations on Roles

The Role of the Curator

There appears to be no correlation between organisational structure and the amount of autonomy each Exhibition Officer has in the exhibition programme of their institution. In fact it appears that the answer to this question lies in the extent of the roles of the Curators of these institutions. In Taranaki Museum, the Programme Co-ordinator curates the whole exhibition programme, as does the Curator of Whanganui Regional Museum. In Hawke's Bay Museum, the Curator of Trust Collections is responsible for curating collections-based exhibitions, as well as some touring exhibitions. The Exhibitions Officer curates many of the exhibitions sourced from outside the Museum. In Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre the Curator of History is responsible for the curation of history exhibitions only. The Exhibitions Officer curates the art exhibitions which make up the bulk of this institution's exhibitions. Coincidentally or not, the Exhibition Officers with the most autonomy are those whose exhibitions programmes are art-based.

The Status of Exhibition Officers in the Organisation

The status of a staff member within an organisation may be both formal in the sense of position within the staff structure and informal in the sense of standing or status among colleagues. This may have some relationship to the authority vested in a position and resource allocation. These form limitations on staff roles.

In creating a context for the examination of the roles of Exhibition Officers, it is important to discuss the organisations in which they work. The museums who participated in this research have a staff size which varies from seven to ten. By New Zealand standards these are reasonably substantial numbers, for example Te Awamutu District Museum has a staff of two (Cairns, 1994). In contrast, The Science Centre and Manawatu Museum, a large regional museum, have staff numbers approaching thirty. This is somewhat larger than most regional museums and has resulted in the museum being structured into departments.

In comparison, most of the case study museums operate a more simple structure. Whanganui Regional Museum has a Director on the top level with a layer of full-time staff on the next level down; technical, part-time and temporary staff occupy the subsequent levels. Taranaki Museum and Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre also have similar organisational structures. However, Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust (the parent organisation of Hawke's Bay Museum) operate a departmental structure, with units organised in "teams".

The Exhibition Officer (Taranaki Museum) is responsible to the Programme Co-ordinator. This places her below the managerial level of the museum. Her salary is set at a low level and she is ranked lowly on the organisation chart. Yet her Director explained that due to her performance her status was higher than these would indicate. The Exhibitions Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum is directly responsible to the Director. While he is on the same level as other full-time staff such as the Curator, and Registrar, his salary is considerably less than that of the Curator. The Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum is a "team leader" and is directly responsible to the Executive Director, Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust. Within the Trust's staff structure, she is on same level as other team leaders such as the Curator of Trust Collections. She has a great deal of autonomy in her roles of curator, designer and technician.

Her salary is slightly more than that of the Curator of Trust Collections. The Exhibition Officer, Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre, is also directly responsible to the Director of her institution, as are all staff of this museum. She too, has a great deal of authority in deciding the content of the exhibitions programme. Her roles also include those of curator of art, designer and technician. Her salary is considerably less than that of the Curator of History.

Salaries

Whether the salary differential between some of the Exhibition Officers and their institutional Curator is one of the relative status of the work ("hands on" exhibition as opposed to "academic" curatorial) or one of qualifications required for the position, requires further examination. An argument could also be made regarding the historical place Curators have had in museums generally versus the relatively recent placement of Exhibition Officers in museums (Van Mensch, 1989 25; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992:211-214). There is only one long-serving Exhibition Officer, Margaret Cranwell of Hawke's Bay Museum. It is possible that the relatively lower salaries and lower level of staff assistance for some Exhibition Officers are disincentives for the retention of these staff over a long period. These may have repercussions for the stability of the roles of Exhibition Officers, if indeed, as I have argued, Exhibition Officers not only fulfil the organisational requirements of their roles, but also adapt their roles to utilise their own particular talents.

Resources

Resources required by Exhibition Officers include finances, materials and staff. Among other factors, a shortage of resources will be reflected in the quality of materials used in the exhibitions galleries, failure to meet deadlines for openings or even the failure to realise the conceptual aim of a particular exhibition. Kahn and Garden, (1994:202) showed that lack of finance and other resources was a major source of discontent among British museum workers.

It was apparent from the case studies that a commonly held perception was that a shortage of staff assistance, not materials, was a major obstacle to maintaining or improving the exhibition programme in each of the museums. In three of the four case studies, the Exhibition Officers

themselves highlighted staff shortages as an area of concern. Margaret Cranwell explained that while her workload had increased, staff assistance had decreased. The lack of technical support means that Exhibition Officers retain the technician role and perform the installation function, either unaided or with minimal assistance. It impinges heavily on the time they have for exhibition changes. It is also likely that a lack of staff assistance reduces the time available for training and researching in exhibition design and technology. The lack of a supervisory role may also affect the status of Exhibition officers among colleagues of their institution.

Standards and Feedback

In the case studies, I discussed how standards were set for the Exhibition Officers. In reviewing all four case studies, it was most evident that few standards were set for Exhibition Officers, and instead the standards that they followed were their own. All Directors thought their Exhibition Officers set and met their own high standards. However none of the participant museums had instituted a systematic appraisal of staff performance. Curators commented on the completed exhibitions, but there appeared to be a lack of a forum for the public to make critical comments.

Exhibitions are for the public, or at least those who choose to become visitors or users of museums. Museum staff should not regard self-criticism as sufficient measure of the quality of their exhibition programme or individual exhibitions. It is important that feedback be sought beyond comments from museum staff and visitors' books. Evaluation and focus group research should be implemented to aid Exhibition Officers in the creation of visitor-oriented exhibitions.

Previous Experience

All the Exhibition Officers had some previous experience in visual media: Margaret Cranwell has a Diploma in Fine Arts and has worked as an art teacher and illustrator; Lisa Stachurski has a Diploma in Industrial Design, and has worked in the exhibition function in another museum; Bert Lett has worked as a printer and graphic artist; Jolene Douglas is a practising artist and was the assistant to her predecessor as Exhibition Officer.

The backgrounds so the participant Exhibition Officers made them suitable for appointment to their present positions. Neither Margaret Cranwell nor Jolene Douglas would be able to adequately fulfil their curatorial responsibilities if neither possessed a strong background in fine arts. Lisa Stachurski was allocated the task of designing her institution's new museum exhibitions because she is a trained designer. Bert Lett has a background in graphic design and is adapting that to three-dimensional design in museum galleries.

However, from experience in visual media, there appears to be no consistent qualification or background that institutions have identified as prerequisites for appointment to these positions. Only Taranaki Museum stipulated that a qualification requirement in their job description: that of a tertiary qualification in design.

Professional and On-Job Training

In the previous section it was obvious that there is no commonality of training among the four Exhibition Officers. Kahn and Garden (1994:202) report that 43% of the respondents to their survey of British museum workers reported poor or inadequate training for their jobs. If they were to seek appropriate training they would find it difficult to obtain. Bedno (1991:53) noted that in the United States there has long been a dearth of training for museum exhibition designers. However, she indicated a recent trend towards an increase in the provision of such training. In New Zealand, some polytechnics, such as Wanganui Polytechnic, include exhibition and gallery design in their design syllabus. However there is no single recognised qualification for generalist exhibitions staff in New Zealand museums.

Stemming from their employment, one would expect that in-service training would be available to these staff. Most of the Exhibition Officers had attended some form of training, including visits to other museums. However, it would be fair to say that the main training of these staff was experience in their current positions.

The research shows that the current Exhibition Officers have the necessary practical skills for their present positions. However further training is an issue if staff are to gain equal status

with other staff, increase their knowledge of new techniques and technology, and enhance their career prospects.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

Understanding the role of one member of staff in a museum is only possible through the documentation and analysis of key relationships and processes. This thesis reinforces the notion that individuals in organisations can only be as effective as the institutional environment allows. Qualitative research methods enable the researcher to explore relationships and processes taking account of the perspectives of a range of participants. Through the exploration of the role of Exhibition Officers, this thesis illustrates the level of insight which can be gained into relationships and processes in regional museums.

This thesis shows the diversity of the roles performed by Exhibition Officers. Depending on the extent of their role, they may be exhibitions programme co-ordinator, exhibitions designer, exhibitions technician, curator, public programmes officer, maintenance officer, public relations officer, and more. Certainly they deserve the title "jack of all trades." The roles of these staff are shaped by the institutions in which they work and the appointees' abilities to adapt their roles to take into account their own interests and skills. The institutional requirements of their role are the result of the staff structure, the boundaries of the Curator's role, availability of resources, and range of exhibitions (often reflected by the range of collections). This is extended by skills and knowledge that Exhibition Officers bring to their positions over and above the core requirements of that position.

Are Exhibition Officers members of a trade or a profession? The duties of Exhibition Officers combine manual, technical and intellectual skills. If they are "jacks of all trades" it is difficult to classify them as members of a "profession" in the traditional sense of the word. Those who have acquired professional status or who have aspirations (or pretensions) to such status tend to perform in specialist roles. Exhibition Officers, by the nature of the range of duties they perform, are not specialists by way of duties, but are specialists by way of general function:

the presentation of exhibitions for the public. Even so, Exhibition Officers are accorded professional status by their Directors and Curators based on equating “professional” with “competence and performance”. Exhibition Officers themselves appear to subscribe to this definition, and in general also wish to be seen as members of a wider “museum profession”. While Exhibition Officers are not “professionals” in the traditional sense of the word, they do have a major attribute that may be regarded as professional behaviour, that is, self-regulation by setting and maintaining their own standards.

However, on the whole, Exhibition Officers are not paid as if they are “professionals”. Judgements of the relative worth of their work may be made not on job content, but on how that work is categorised: to be categorised as “trade” (or “non-professional”) is to be paid at a low salary level, while to be categorised as “professional” is to be paid at a higher level.

One of the main drawbacks to the recognition of the professionalism of Exhibition Officers is the lack of formal qualifications held by some of those employed in these positions. This is compounded by the deficiency of available training for these positions. Together, these not only affect the status of individuals but reduce opportunities for advancement in other areas. Two of the participant Exhibition Officers hold tertiary qualifications but there is no single recognised qualification for appointment to these positions.

Suitable training for Exhibition Officers is a scarce commodity. Even practical training is lacking as few short courses in exhibitions related skills are offered through regional training workshops. This is an issue for exhibitions staff to network on and to develop a curriculum that could be used for the design of workshops. Some exhibitions staff do not have the prerequisites to enter the post-graduate programme in Museums Studies at Massey University. Clearly an under-graduate course is needed in the role and functions of museums, combined with practical training in exhibition design and fabrication.

A study of the training and experience of Exhibition Officers prior to their present employment shows that the common element is a shared experience in visual media of some

sort. While two of the participant Exhibition officers had some previous experience in the exhibitions function, there were few other similarities of experience or training.

Most of the participant Exhibition Officers appeared to be placed relatively highly in the organisational structures. However this was not generally matched by a salary equivalent to that of the institutions' Curators. There may be some merit in the establishment of national salary scales for museum workers based on job content and performance rather than on qualifications and status.

The case studies show that regional museums rely on informal communication for the planning of exhibitions. This is commensurate with the informal culture of these organisations and makes communication between Exhibition Officer and Curator quick and effective. It is likely that all museums rely on informal communication between staff to some extent. Larger institutions may also benefit from the fostering of informal lines of communication. This should be seen as an adjunct to, and not a replacement for formal modes of communication. The quality of communication and teamwork between staff appears to rest largely on mutual respect and a close working relationship. If such relationships are unable to be developed, this form of communication may not be effective. This also emphasises the importance of developing the communication skills of staff involved in exhibition planning in museums.

The use of written exhibition briefs was favoured by staff planning long-term exhibitions. The advantages of these are the ability to document and communicate a range and depth of information that is difficult to do with verbal communication. However, the case studies show that briefs must be supplemented with close verbal communication between Exhibition Officer and Curator when these staff are working in partnership.

The case studies show that the participant Directors and Curators have a high regard for the competence and performance of their Exhibition Officers. This gave the latter a great deal of autonomy in their work. However, the performance of the latter was not assessed internally through a system of performance review, or externally through public evaluation of exhibitions. Many exhibitions were subject to peer review, but this is not as rigorous as

exhibition evaluation. Museum exhibitions are for the public, not the staff of the museum. Whether exhibitions are "successful" or not should be decided by the public. It should be noted that none of the case study museums have any mechanisms in place to elicit public input into exhibitions development, or to obtain critical visitor feedback on exhibitions.

One of the main problems identified by this study is the lack of staff resources allocated to Exhibition Officers. This results in little time for staff training, long-term exhibitions become dated and the potential for in-house collections-based exhibitions is reduced. Many museums are forced to buy in touring exhibitions to alleviate the pressure on Exhibitions and Curatorial staff. Some of the Exhibition Officers also act as their institutions Public Programmes Officer but are not allocated extra staff resources to cope with the increasing demand for more programmes.

The philosophies expressed by all the Exhibition Officers stressed the communicative nature of exhibitions. It is clear that exhibitions are a form of media. While there was some discussion of the visual experience to be gained from exhibitions, there was little discussion of museums as forums for public debate. This is possibly due to the type of exhibitions mounted by museums with limited resources, but also reflects a lack of consultation with the community and possibly a lack of debate about the purpose of these institutions.

While many negative aspects of the work of Exhibition officers were raised, it is clear that the staff in these positions gain a great deal of job satisfaction. This may provide the motivation to perform at a high level in the face of shortages of staff resources and relatively low salaries.

The significance of this work is in the documentation of actual practice in New Zealand museums. This provides another point of view to the current literature which is overwhelmingly prescriptive and is derived from Europe and North America. By documenting the role or roles of an occupational group to be found in regional museums in this country, we add to the discussion on the development of a "museum profession". By understanding the dynamics of relationships between administrators, Exhibition Officers and

Curators, we gain an insight into how museums function as organisations. We also gain an understanding of the processes behind the production of exhibitions in regional museums in this country.

Many other issues arising from this thesis require investigation. An investigation is needed of exhibition planning processes within New Zealand museums. This will aid museums and museologists in the development of appropriate models and theories for the use of institutions and for the teaching of students; a national survey of museum salaries by occupation, and duties and qualifications should be carried out. This will assist any inquiry into the establishment of national or regional salary scales. Such salary scales should take into account job content, performance, relevance and level of qualifications. This will be a more equitable way of paying staff than at present; the development of a draft curriculum for the training of exhibition staff is a necessity. Exhibitions staff must network to establish their own needs. A training needs analysis for exhibitions staff should be conducted nationally by the Exhibitions Group Aotearoa New Zealand. The Museum Studies Unit, Massey University would be the most suitable organisation to approach for the development of a curriculum and the co-ordination of training to meet the goals of the curriculum; research into the development of staff roles should be ongoing. Certainly some insight is needed into the rationale of creating more staff positions such as those occupied by the Exhibitions Officer, Hawke's Bay Museum and the Exhibition Officer, Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre, who carry exhibitions through from inception to completion. This is an adjunct to and not a replacement for the need to develop teamwork in museums.

I have not had the opportunity to address all of the issues signalled in this thesis. However, I hope it has provided some useful information on an occupational group who are vital to the relationship between museums and the public.

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Appendix 1

Consent Form

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Research Project for Master of Arts in
Museum Studies, Massey University:

"The Role of Exhibition Officers in Regional Museums"
by Stuart McAdam, I.D. no. 90105523.

I have had details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. I also understand that I may ask for further information at any time.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time or decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information on the basis that it will be confidential and will only be discussed by the researcher with his supervisors at Massey University.

I understand that for the purposes of a thesis, information that I give may appear in print. I also understand that I will be given a copy of the written draft of any resulting publication that relate to information I have given and that I will be given the opportunity to comment on this prior to publication.

I am willing to participate in this study under the conditions described above.

Signed:

Name:

Institution:

Date:

Appendix 2

Interview Schedules

Directors	132
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Curators / Public Programmes Co-ordinator	145

Name:
Museum:

Firstly, thank you for agreeing to speak to me.

How long have been in the museum profession?

What positions have you held in museums?

What is your current job title?

How long have you been the Director here?

Would you tell me what the role of your position is?

How does your position relate to the Exhibition Officer's position?

Who is the Exhibition Officer directly responsible to?

Exhibitions

How much involvement does your Exhibition Officer have in setting the exhibition programme for the year?

Do you have an annual exhibitions programme?

133

What processes do you use to bring together your exhibition programme?

To what extent are you involved in the museum's exhibition programme?

In what ways does this bring you into contact with the Exhibition Officer?

Role

Would you describe the role of your Exhibition Officer?

To what extent is this covered by the Exhibition Officer's job description?

Status

What is the status of the Exhibition Officer relative¹³⁴ to other staff here?

Do you think this is an accurate reflection of their role in the museum?

Do you regard your Exhibition Officer as a museum professional?

If the Exhibition Officer's salary is different from other staff, why is this?

Standards

What standards do you expect of your Exhibition Officer?

Are these standards formalised in written documents?

What are these?

What feedback do you give the Exhibition Officer regarding his/her performance?

Training

What on the job and formal training has your Exhibition Officer received to your knowledge?

Does your Exhibition Officer have the opportunity to attend training courses, conferences and seminars?

If the Exhibition Officer suggested the Museum fund some training for him/her what criteria would you use to guide your response?

Change

Do you think the role of the Exhibition Officer has changed over time in this institution?

Do you see it changing in the future (and in what ways?)

136

Are there any other questions I should ask?

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Quotation:

Name:
Museum:

Firstly, thanks for agreeing to speak to me.

Background

How long have you been in the museum profession?

Of that time, how long have you been an Exhibition Officer?

How long have you been in your current position?

What's your current job title?

What's your present salary? (for comparison with other Exhib. Offrs.)

What qualities and qualifications did you think you had that made you suitable for this position?

How would you like to see your career develop?

Training

What training opportunities have you had in your present position?

What other training would you like?

Who or what organisation do you think would be appropriate to carry out this training?

What level of support do you think you would get from your museum?
138

Philosophy

Would you describe your philosophy of what an exhibition should be?

Would you describe the influences on your work?

If your institution displays art, history, ethnography, and natural history, how does your approach to the display of these compare?

Exhibition Officer's Position

What do you see as your role in the Museum?

What are the main responsibilities of your position?

Do you find this role compatible with your own philosophy on exhibitions?

What differences are there between the role described in your job description and your own definition of your role?

Have there been any changes in the role of your position in your time in the position? 199

What changes do you think are likely in future?

Planning

To what extent are you involved in consultation over the museum's exhibition plan for the year?

Do you think there need to be changes in the consultation process?

What changes would you like to see?

To what extent are you involved in developing the brief and other exhibition planning documents?

Do you think there should be changes to your involvement in the preparation of planning documents?

What changes would you like to see?

Design

To what extent are you involved in exhibition design? 140

Who gives you the concept on which you base your design?

How is this conveyed to you?

Would you like to see this done in a differerent manner?

How would you like to see this done?

What audience do you have in mind when working on a design?

Does a particular audience make much difference to the style and content of an exhibition?

Exhibitions

141

How many exhibitions did you work on last year?

How does this number compare to other years?

Resources

Do you think the Exhibitions department is adequately resourced to fulfill the Museum's requirements?

Do you think there is a reasonable balance of Exhibition staff to other staff in the museum?

Do you have the resources to make modifications to current exhibitions following feedback or evaluation?

Teamwork

In what ways do you interact with other staff of your institute when implementing the exhibition programme?

Do you think good personal relationships make for good teamwork?

Do you think it is important to build good relationships to aid teamwork?¹⁴²

Have you found the staffing of your museum to be stable enough to contribute to teamwork?

Standards

In what ways have performance standards been set for you by the Museum?

Are these written into a formal agreement?

Do you feel these standards are achievable?

What standards do you set yourself in carrying out your duties?

How do you monitor your performance in carrying out your duties?

How do you make changes in your approach to work following self-
assessment? 143

Feedback

What feedback do you get on the success of your work?

Is this feedback formal or informal?

Would you describe these?

Do you find feedback helpful?

Could you give me any example of exhibitions changed as a result
of feedback from others?

Recognition

To what extent do you feel exhibition staff are recognised in the
museum profession? (eg. status, pay, thanks).

Do you see yourself as a museum professional?

How do you feel about your status in the museum here?¹⁴⁴

What recognition do you think your work deserves?

Having gone through this interview would you like to make any more comments on your role in the Museum?

Are there any other questions I should ask?

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Quotation:

Name:

Museum:

145

Firstly, thanks for agreeing to speak to me.

What's your job title?

How long have you held your current position at this museum?

Would you describe the role of your position?

How does your position relate to that of the Exhibition Officer?

What input do you have in the development of the museum's exhibition programme?

In what ways do you work with the Exhibition Officer to implement the exhibition programme?

Role

146

What do you see as the Exhibition Officer's role in this museum?

Exhibitions

To what extent do you initiate exhibitions?

How do you consult the Exhibition Officer when developing a concept for an exhibition or an exhibition brief?

Is the Exhibition Officer involved in the planning process for Exhibitions?

How do you convey your ideas for exhibitions to the Exhibition Officer?

To what extent do you feel it is possible for the Exhibition Officer to translate a concept or brief into a finished exhibition?

How do you measure the implementation of your ideas by the Exhibition Officer?

What feedback do you give the Exhibition Officer on the completion of an exhibition?

Resources

Do you think the resources allocated to the Exhibition Officer are sufficient to achieve the desired results?

What measures do you think would help the Exhibition Officer in his/her work?

Status

What status do you think the Exhibition Officer has¹⁴⁸ within this museum?

Do you think this is an accurate reflection of their role in the museum?

Do you regard the Exhibition Officer as a museum professional?

Are there any other questions you think I should ask?

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Quotation:

Appendix 3

Exhibition Officers' Duties

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Exhibition Officer's Duties

	Margaret Cranwell	Lisa Stachurski	Bert Lett	Jolene Douglas
Initiating Exhibitions	✓			✓
Programming Exhibitions	✓			✓
Curation of Exhibitions	✓	Some		✓
Exhibitions Research	✓	✓		✓
Selection of Objects for Exhibitions	✓	✓		✓
Liaise with Exhibitors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exhibition Administration	✓	✓		✓
Exhibition Design	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exhibition Installation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lighting		✓	✓	✓
Label Design	✓	✓	✓	✓
Label Text	✓	✓	✓	✓
Label Production	Some	✓	✓	✓
Leaflet Text	✓			✓
Leaflet Design	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leaflet Production	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matting and Framing Artworks	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design Exhibition Furniture	✓	✓	✓	✓
Manufacture Exhibition Furniture	Some	✓	✓	
Liaise with Public	Schools	✓		✓
Design Public Programmes	✓	✓		✓
Administer Public Programmes	✓	✓		✓
Design Publicity	✓	✓	✓	✓
Publicity Production	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design Catalogues	Some	✓	✓	✓
Catalogue Production	Arrange	✓	✓	✓
Design Newsletters		✓	✓	✓
Newsletter Production			✓	
Exhibition Maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintain Public Areas	Exhibs.	✓	✓	✓
Maintain Workshop	✓	✓	✓	
Maintain Exhibition Supplies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintain Workshop Supplies	Exhibs.	✓	✓	
Security	Exhibs.	✓		
Supervise Assistant(s)	✓	✓	✓	Volntrs
Supervise Other Staff				
Supervise Contract Staff			✓	
Attend Staff Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓
Liaise with Director	✓	✓	✓	✓
Liaise with Curator	✓	✓	✓	✓
Liaise with Registrar	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Margaret Cranwell	Lisa Stachurski	Bert Lett	Jolene Douglas
Liaise with Education Officer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Liaise with Other Staff:		✓	✓	✓
Lighting and Maintenance Officer	✓			
Administration Officer	✓			
Loading/Unloading Exhibitions		✓	✓	✓
Packing/Unpacking Exhibitions	✓	✓		✓
Loading Unloading - Other		✓		✓
Managing Budgets	✓			✓

Appendix 4

Case Study Documents

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Appendix 4 (continued)**Case Study 4.1: Margaret Cranwell (Hawke's Bay Museum)**

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HAWKE'S BAY 154 CULTURAL TRUST

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: EXHIBITIONS OFFICER, HB MUSEUM

RESPONSIBLE TO: Executive Director, HB Cultural Trust

STAFF DIRECTLY SUPERVISED: Museum Exhibition Preparator and other staff or volunteers when assisting with the mounting and striking of exhibitions.

POSITION CONCEPT -

The Exhibitions Officer is responsible for the administration, mounting, striking and publicising of all permanent and temporary exhibitions originating both from within the Hawke's Bay Museum and from outside sources, and for the planning of a temporary exhibition programme in accordance with the institution's exhibition policy.

The Exhibitions Officer is the team leader for the public programmes of the Hawke's Bay Museum.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES -

1a. To be responsible for organising a temporary exhibitions programme at least twelve months in advance, in consultation with the Curator of Trust Collections and the Trust exhibitions committee.

1b. To schedule by December each year all exhibitions for the following year, in consultation with the Curator of Trust Collections.

1c. To design, mount and strike all touring exhibitions.

1d. To organise, administer, mount and strike each year the local exhibitions of art and craft, to attend on any selectors, to receive works from exhibitors and return them to exhibitors or purchasers, in accordance with established deadlines.

1e. To design, mount and strike temporary exhibitions of the permanent collection curated by the museum curatorial staff or by guest curators invited by the Curator of Trust Collections.

1f. To design, mount and strike all permanent exhibitions in consultation with the museum curatorial staff, in accordance with established deadlines.

2. To be responsible for the publicising of all exhibitions, in consultation with the Curator of Trust Collections.

-2-

3. To liaise with the Registration Assistant on the condition reporting of all touring exhibitions (ingoing and outgoing).
4. To organise refreshments for exhibition openings in conjunction with appropriate individuals or organisations and to be in attendance for the full duration of exhibition openings.
5. To be responsible for the general supervision of the appearance of the galleries, including the entrance and foyer, and for the maintenance of exhibition related poster displays, signposting and descriptive labels.
6. To attend courses and seminars as approved by the Executive Director which will extend training relevant to the position.
7. To deal with correspondence concerning the exhibitions programme, other than curatorial generated exhibitions.
8. To be responsible for any public programmes taking place in the galleries during open hours, and outside open hours, in consultation with the Curator of Trust Collections where appropriate.
9. To be responsible for the design style and printing of all labels and catalogues and for other publications as delegated in consultation with the Curator of Trust Collections.
10. To report regularly to the Executive Director on current expenditure within the public programmes exhibitions area. To provide a budget for the following year's programme and to provide a written report each month on the exhibition programme and work completed during the previous month.
11. To ensure that stocks of catalogues, posters and other supplementary material are ordered and available on time. To liaise with the Trust Office Manager over their sales.
12. To carry out the matt cutting, mounting and framing of works on paper as required for exhibition purposes.
13. To design and supervise the construction and maintenance of all exhibition furniture in association with the Carpenter and to construct exhibition furniture when appropriate.
14. To supervise the setting of exhibition lighting in association with the Technical Manager.
15. To notify the Curator of Trust Collections of conservation materials required for display.
16. To attend all staff and planning meetings as required by the Executive Director.

-3-

17. To hold regular team meetings with public programmes staff.
18. To supervise and when necessary to assist with the loading and unloading of touring exhibitions, in conjunction with the Registration Assistant and to maintain the orderly condition of the loading bay.
19. To direct and supervise the Exhibitions Preparator and to delegate such duties as appropriate and to appraise his or her performance when required by the Executive Director.
20. To maintain the file of artists' biographical notes.
21. To supervise all staff from the public programmes team and to give guidance to any technical staff assisting with the mounting and striking of exhibitions.
22. To carry out any other duties required by the Executive Director.

NATURE & SCOPE -

The Exhibitions Officer liaises with the Curator of Trust Collections, the Technical Manager and other team leaders.

The Exhibitions Officer is the key staff member in presenting the public face of the Hawke's Bay Museum and the incumbent must be sensitive to the varying needs of the wider community and the Museum's relationship to those needs.

SALARY RANGE:

The salary will be \$ p.a. for a 37½ hr week. Normal hours of work to be 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. The salary range is Grade 7 on the Trust's salary matrix.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL:

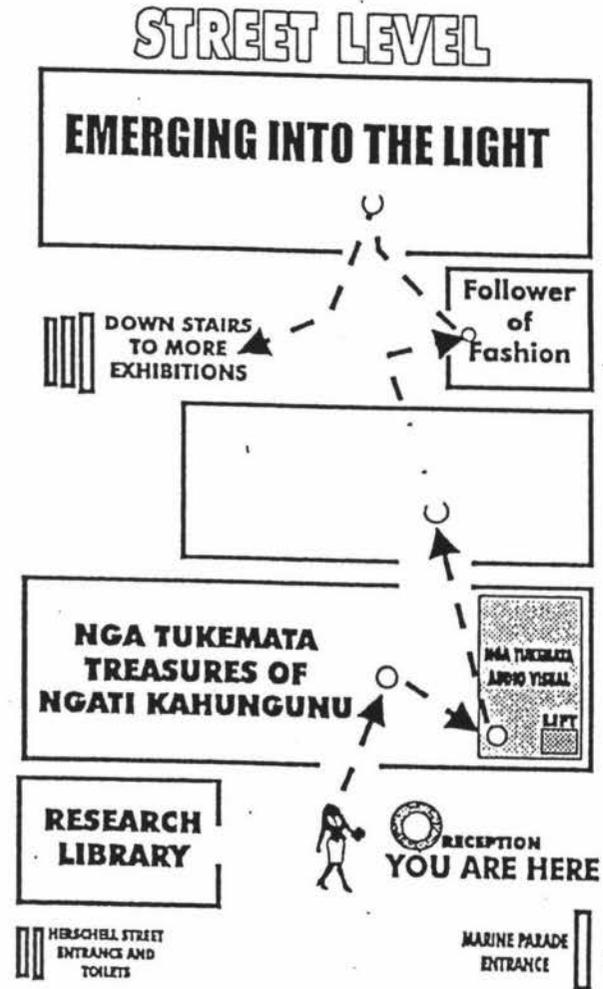
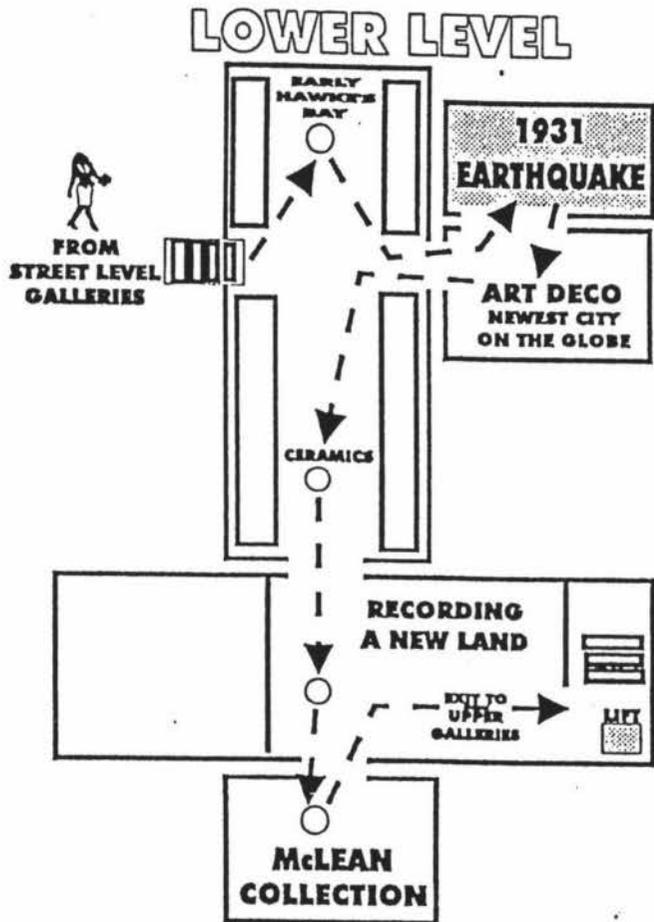
The Exhibition Officer's performance of the above accountabilities will be appraised regularly at intervals set out in the collective staff contract.

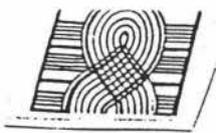
REVIEW:

This job description is subject to review from time to time. The Executive Director will consult with the job holder but reserves the right to alter the job description should he deem it necessary.

He/she will be expected to uphold, carry out and be publicly supportive of the Trust's policies and directorial decisions. All policy or controversial matters will be referred to the Executive Director.

April 1993





EXHIBITION PROGRAMME
- Hawke's Bay Museum, Napier
- Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre, Hastings

AUGUST 1994 - JANUARY 1995

RECORDING A NEW LAND

Lower Holt Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

Four immigrants to NZ record aspects of life in a new country. Paintings of 19th century flora and fauna by Horatio Gordon Robley, Georgina Burne Hetley, Alfred Cooper and Alfred Chapman.

PICTURE US HERE - 'REGIONALISM' IN NZ AND HAWKE'S BAY

To 21 August

Malden Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

This exhibition examines the 'Regionalist' movement in Hawke's Bay through an extensive selection of paintings from the collection and loaned from other galleries, featuring some primary NZ icons

KEELY McGLYNN - CASTING IN GLASS

To 28 August

McLean Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

Recent directions in contemporary cast glass by HB based artist. Keely is one of the few glassmakers who work in the 'lost-wax' technique and casts the glass as in sculpture.

NOVEL-TEA POTS

6 August - 11 September

Bestall Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

Ceramicists examine the teapot as a art form and material from the Museum's collection interprets the world wide tradition of tea drinking.

ALL THAT GLITTERS...

13 August - 30 September

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

An exhibition of metal objets d'art from the collection, featuring Victorian and Art Deco silverware, Islamic brass and bronze.

HAWKE'S BAY REVIEW

20 August - 2 October

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

Annual selected exhibition of painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking and photography. Open to all artists resident Hawke's Bay. Guest artist/selector James Ross.

BANA PAUL

19 September - 16 October

Bestall Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

HB based fibre artist Bana Paul explores the links between historical and contemporary Maori fibre art in this exhibition comprising work from the Museum's collection and constructions by Bana. Opening : Sunday 18 September, 5.30pm

TELECOM ART AWARD

23 September - 10 October

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

Exhibition of work by finalists for the 1994 Hawke's Bay telephone directory cover.

TANGENTS

Lathe turned objects by Alan Neilson

27 September - 6 November

McLean Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

Developing the possibilities of the wooden bowl. Local artist Alan Neilson explores new directions in wood turning, incorporating perspex, paper, aluminium and other media.

Opening : Monday 26 September, 5.30pm

3-D DISCOVERY

12 October - 4 December

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

Touring exhibition of three dimensional discovery from Australia.

Special admission charges apply.

DIRECTIONS - RECENT WORKS BY GEOFF FULLER

7 October - 4 November

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

Exhibition by Havelock North artist Geoff Fuller

rites of spring

21 October - 4 December

Bestall Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

Thematic exhibition open to NZ quilters. The exhibition offers two awards - Mary Vigor Brown Award of \$500 and Viewers' Choice of \$300, to be selected by Juliet Taylor

RIGHT ROYAL SUMMER

Installation by Greer Twiss

18 November - 1995

Cast metal and found objects by Auckland-based artist Greer Twiss constitute an installation looking at environmental themes.

RUTHERFORD COLLECTION

December - January

- dates to be confirmed

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

MATT PINE

December - January

- dates to be confirmed

Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre

CONTEMPORARY MAORI ART

5 December - 29 January

Malden Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

Exhibition looking at contemporary directions in Maori art curated by Sandy Adsett

ALPHABET SOUP

16 December - 29 January

Bestall Gallery, Hawke's Bay Museum

A - Z through the Museum's collections

Programme subject to alteration. For further details contact the Hawke's Bay Museum - Ph 835 7781, Fax 835 3984.

Appendix 4 (continued)**Case Study 4.2: Lisa Stachurski (Taranaki Museum)**

Job Description, Exhibition Officer, Taranaki Museum	161
Gallery Floor Plan, Taranaki Museum	163

<u>Department:</u>	Community Services Taranaki Museum
<u>Position Number:</u>	
<u>Position Title:</u>	Exhibition Officer
<u>To Whom Responsible:</u>	Programme Co-ordinator/Deputy Director
<u>Functional Relationships:</u>	Director Museum staff Museum/Gallery colleagues Public

Description:

The Exhibition Officer will be responsible for the installation of temporary and longer term exhibitions within the museum and, from time to time, exhibitions and displays held outside the museum.

The incumbent will also be responsible for the upkeep of the museum workshop.

General Requirements:

- a) A tertiary qualification in the area of graphic art or design.
- b) A proven ability in woodwork and joinery
- c) Ability to work with minimal supervision.
- d) Well developed and tidy work habits.
- e) Museum/Gallery experience desirable.

Responsibilities:

- a) To help plan and install temporary and longer term exhibitions.
- b) To construct display furniture as required.
- c) To maintain the workshop and display preparation area in a safe, clean and usable condition.
- d) To ensure all tools and power equipment are maintained to the highest safety standards.
- e) To maintain adequate supplies of display materials and ensure the safe storage of dangerous or valuable materials and equipment.
- f) To ensure that all display lighting equipment is functioning correctly.

- g) To assist with minor general maintenance tasks which may arise from time to time.
- h) To provide for adequate security for objects and displays during and after construction.

Special Requirements:

- a) Has the ability to become an integral part of a small but dedicated team.
- b) Is culturally sensitive.
- c) Is committed to achieving the Museums' goals and objectives.
- d) Is well organised and able to meet deadlines.

Salary Range:

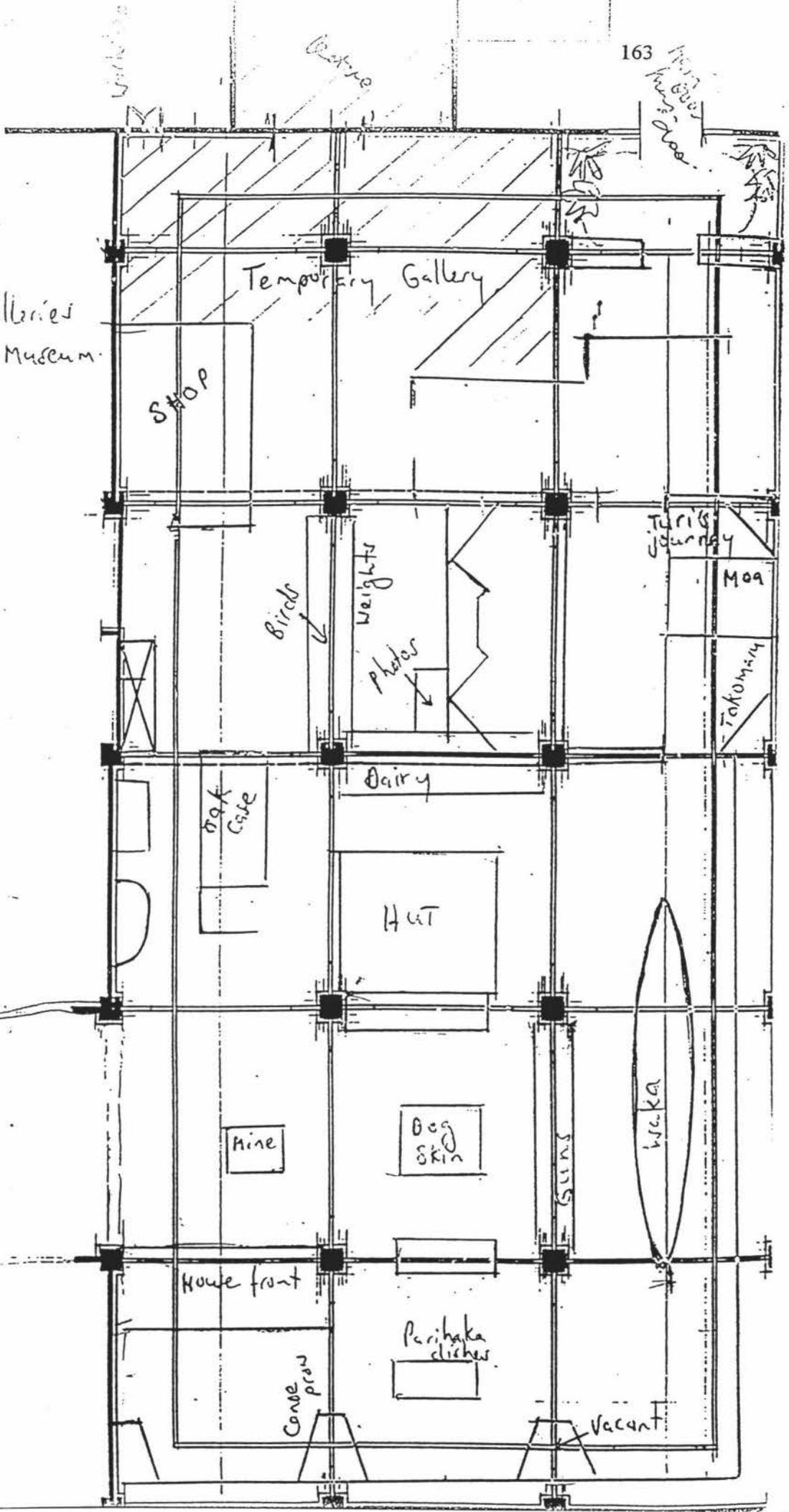
Date: July 1993

Assume responsibility as of July 1993
 (i) To carry out appropriate
 challenge postless parables etc

Main Galleries
Taranaki Museum

PATTERN OF BRACKING BETWEEN
ALLEYS

(MAIN) GALLERY



Appendix 4 (continued)**Case Study 4.3: Bert Lett (Whanganui Regional Museum)**

Job Description, Exhibitions Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum 165

Gallery Floor Plan, Whanganui Regional Museum 166

Job Description***Exhibition Officer, Whanganui Regional Museum.***

Responsible to :	Director, Whanganui Regional Museum
Responsible for:	Maintenance Officer and any employment work scheme employees and volunteers involved in the exhibitions programme.
Functional Relationships with:	Curator, Education Officer and Registrar.
Liaison With:	Staff of other museums.
Primary Purpose of the Position:	Responsible for the design and installation of the Museum's temporary and permanent exhibitions and general public areas to a standard that the public would expect.

Key Tasks

Assist the Curator and at necessary times be responsible for the planning and preparation of the Museum's exhibitions and displays.

Design and produce exhibitions that:

- Entertain and inform the public.
- Promote the region's natural and human heritage.
- Deal sensitively and co-operatively with cultural issues.
- Responsible for the design, production and distribution of advertising and promotional material and relevant publications.
- Responsible for the security, maintenance of exhibition spaces, including lighting installation and maintenance and audio-visual equipment.
- Co-operate with the Registrar to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained for the conservation of objects on display.
- Co-operate with the Education Officer where appropriate to ensure that displays are suitable for teaching purposes.
- To maintain the workshop and display preparation areas in a safe and usable condition.

TO OUR FUTURE

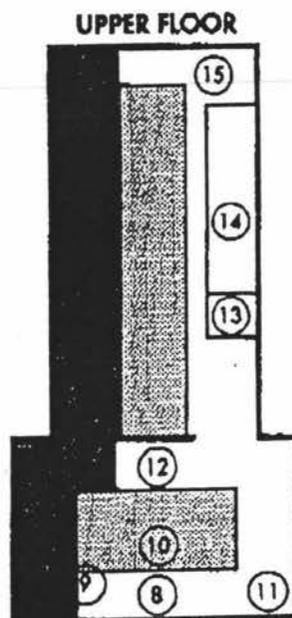
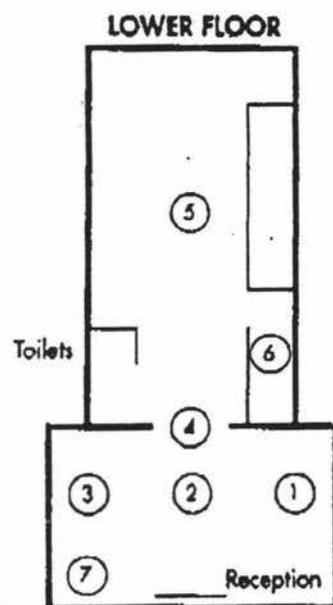
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This exhibition, celebrating the Whanganui Regional Museum's centennial, explores some of the rich collections which have been preserved in the belief that our future will be enriched through a greater understanding of our past.

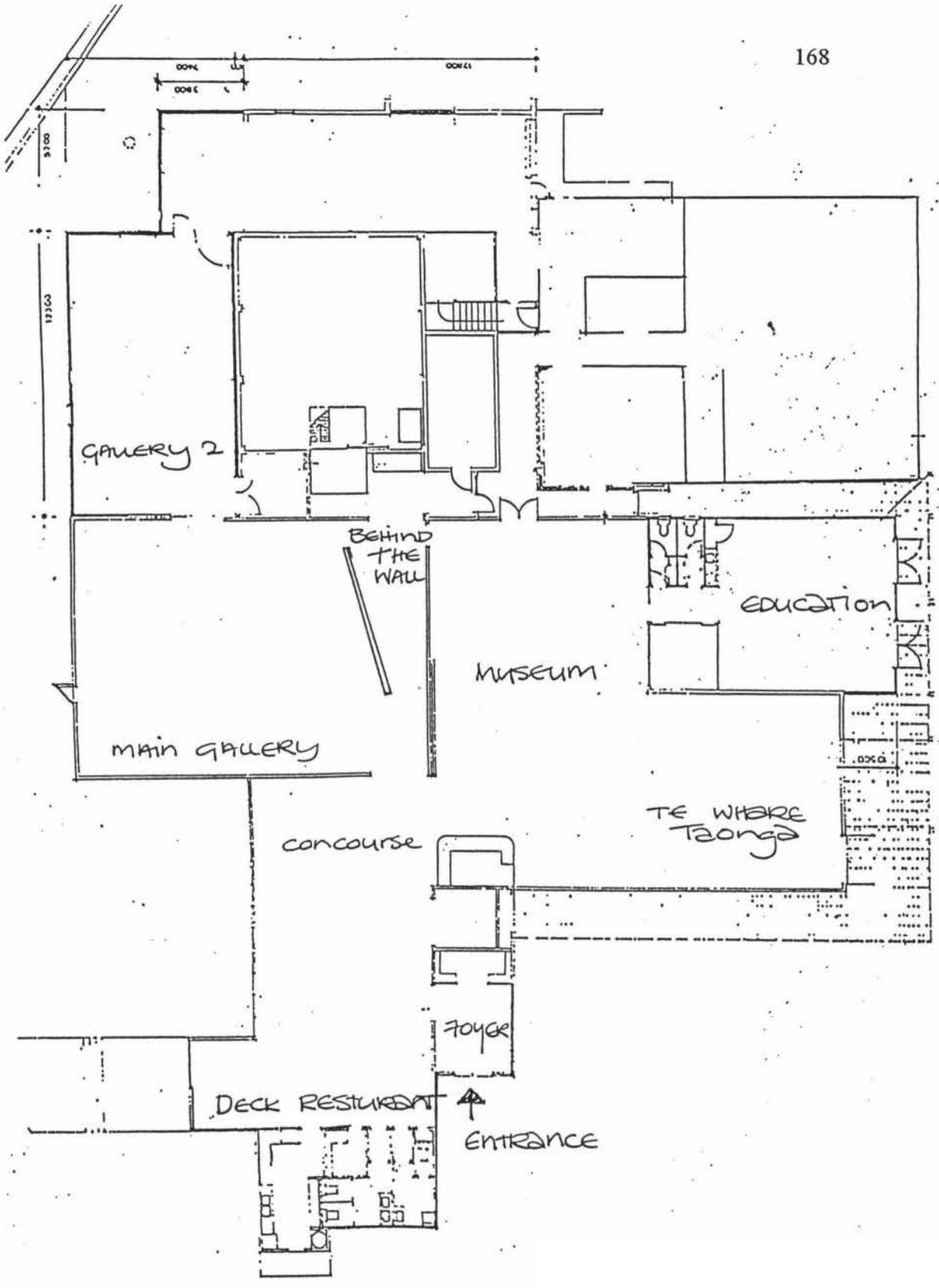
Follow the Back to our Future tour as it tells you the Museum Story and feature some highlights of Wanganui's natural and cultural heritage.

- 1 **THE MUSEUM STORY** The story of the Museum's foundation and some of the people whose vision helped in its development.
- 2 **THE ROCKET SHIP** A childhood thrill from Londontown.
- 3 **WANGANUI STREET** Opened in 1973, the street recreates an impression of early 20th century Wanganui.
- 4 **TE ATI-HAUNUI-A-PAPA RANGI GALLERY** Nga taonga tuku iho.
- 5 **NGA WAKA** Te Mata o Hōia, Kiekie, 'Fau Whenua.
- 6 **TE PATAKA WHAKAAE** A The Lindauer Portrait Gallery.
- 7 **SUNFISH**
- 8 **THE WILLIAMS ORGANA** The first barrel organ in New Zealand.
- 9 **NEW MOVES FOR OLD COLLECTIONS** A look at the behind-the-scenes work of the Museum.
- 10 **WHALE WATCH** Find out why Wanganui's *Tasmacetus shepherdii* is famous.
- 11 **QUEEN'S PARK** Views of Rutland Stockade.
- 12 **BIRDS AND BUGS** Butterflies and birds from around the world.
- 13 **PERSONALITY PLUS** William Webb, "Cocky" Caines, Russian Jack and a horse called Rangipuhi.
- 14 **GLIMPSSES OF HISTORY** Treasures from the archives.
- 15 **EXTINCT AND ENDANGERED** Featuring the story of the Museum's moa bone collection.



Appendix 4 (continued)**Case Study 4.4: Jolene Douglas, Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre**

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“Have You Thought About With Us Exhibiting Lately?”	169
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HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT EXHIBITING WITH US LATELY?

WE STILL HAVE VACANCIES IN BOTH GALLERIES FOR

IF YOU PROVIDE US WITH YOUR ARTWORKS PLUS \$75.00

WE WILL PROVIDE THE REST
THE ADVERTISING
THE PREVIEW
THE INVITATIONS
THE CATALOGUE
THE HANGING!
THE VENUE

COMMISSION 25% members - 30% non-members

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

PHONE.....

PREFERRED MONTHS..a.....

..b.....

PREFERRED GALLERY.....

your comments.....

JOLENE DOUGLAS
EXHIBITIONS

INFORMATION FOR EXHIBITOR

GALLERY 2

WALL LENGTH Movable screens, (up to 10) at 1.79m wide
can be use to subdivide the area.

AREA Rectangle 12.3 X 7.3m

STUD HEIGHT 3.4m

WALLS Off-white (puma) rough cast covered particle
board, cannot accept screws.
Three hanging rails set into the wall at
1.88, 1.52 and 1.18m above the floor and a
heavy load bearing rail at 2.9m above the
floor.

LIGHTING Fluorescent on walls augmented by spotlights,
which also cover central areas

ENVIRONMENTAL
CONTROL Thermostatically controlled heating and forced
air ventilation. Not air conditioned.

CONDITIONS OF EXHIBITION

COMMISSION 25% MEMBERS. 30% NON MEMBERS
Please make allowances for commission when
working out prices.

SALES The exhibitor will be paid upon full payment
of the sales from the exhibition on or about
the 20th of the month following the completion
of the exhibition.

FREIGHT Freight to and from the gallery is the
responsibility of the exhibitor

INSURANCE Insurance of works in transit to and from the
gallery is the responsibility of the artist.
While the work is in the gallery building it
is covered by the gallery's insurance policy
of up to \$200.00 per item.

FLOOR COVERING: CARPET

- INVITATIONS The gallery's standard format invitations are circulated to its mailing list at the gallery's expense. If requested invitations are supplied to the exhibitor for personal circulation.
- CATALOGUES The gallery will provide its standard format catalogue.
- PREVIEWS The gallery will supply wine and non alcoholic punch.
NIBBLES AND EXTRA REFRESHMENTS ARE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE EXHIBITOR
- PROMOTION The gallery relies heavily on the use of free publicity with newspapers, radio, and magazine listings.
- ADVERTISING The gallery has two exhibition adverts per month with the Gisborne Herald.
THE COST OF EXTRA ADVERTISING WILL BE AT THE EXHIBITORS EXPENSE, the contents and details to be first discussed with the gallery.

ALL ENQUIRES TO

Exhibitions Officer
Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre
P.O.BOX 716
Gisborne

06 867 3832

EXHIBITION CONTRACT

Name of Exhibitor.....

Name to be used in connection with exhibition.
(if different from the above)

.....
Address

.....

Postal Address (if different)

Phone number wk.....

hm.....

GST number

EXHIBITION DATES

.....

PREVIEW Preview required: YES / NO

Standard refreshments
required YES / NO

PREVIEW INVITATIONS:

Standard invitations
required YES / NO

Extra invitations required
for exhibitor YES / NO

Number

Exhibitor to print own
invitations at own expense YES / NO

Details to appear on invitation,(title etc)

.....

.....

OPENING SPEAKER.....

CATALOGUES Standard catalogues required YES / NO

Exhibitor to print own catalogue at own expense YES / NO

PROMOTION Standard promotion required YES / NO

Extra promotion to be handled by exhibitor YES / NO

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The exhibitor requires the following special conditions

.....
.....
.....
.....

I have read the information for Exhibitors and understand the conditions under which my exhibition will be held

EXHIBITOR (signature)

PLEASE RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO CONFIRM EXHIBITION