

**Hon Kiri Allan**  
**Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage**  
**Associate Minister for the Environment**  
**HPA/ICOMOS joint conference**  
**(Conference theme: *Harsh Reality: Current Challenges for Historic Heritage in New Zealand*)**  
**Keynote speech**  
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**Acknowledgements**

I'd like to thank James and Pamela Dziwulska, Chair of the ICOMOS New Zealand Board, for hosting this conference and creating the space for us to talk about the challenges facing heritage, and I'd like to thank all of you for coming.

I'd also like to thank Dr Phillip Hartley for a truly admirable job in pulling this whole event together.

***Opening remarks***

Thank you for inviting me to be the keynote speaker at this conference.

It's an ideal opportunity to speak with all of you as key members of our heritage sector and a chance for all of us to connect, share, listen and learn about what is happening with heritage at the moment in our Aotearoa.

In short – there is so much going on. In particular the widespread reforms to the resource management system that the Government has underway which I will focus on this morning. This intersects with both of my roles as Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage and Associate Minister for the Environment.

Other significant work with a heritage component that we're undertaking is the National Adaptation Plan, which is part of our response to climate change.

Alongside this, there is the strengthening heritage protection work programme that Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage is leading. I understand that Helen (McCracken) and Amanda (Mulligan) from Manatū Taonga have spoken to you in a bit more detail about those initiatives already.

I want to take this opportunity firstly to thank Historic Places Aotearoa and ICOMOS for bringing this conference together, and also for all of the tireless work that you do.

I understand that the conference was originally supposed to be held last year, but like many events around the country unfortunately could not go ahead. This makes it even better to see the incredible turn out today, for this opportunity to come together.

The advocacy performed by Historic Places Aotearoa is such an important part of our heritage protection landscape. We are so lucky and I so appreciate that this work is done from the heart. It's done by those of you who have such deep knowledge and passion for heritage places. Thank you for all that you do.

ICOMOS New Zealand/Te Mana o Nga Pouwhenua o Te Ao also plays an extremely valuable role in supporting the expertise of people and organisations engaged in heritage conservation; promoting professional standards; and bringing people together, as you have done today, amongst many other things.

### ***Value of our heritage***

I want to talk a little bit about the value of our heritage and the significant benefits of ensuring our future generations get to experience it like we do.

The heritage of a town, city or region is part of its life and soul. Our heritage places remind us of our people, and they remind us of our past. They're an intrinsic part of our identity today as communities and as a nation, and are an important reflection of how far we, as New Zealanders, have come.

They help us value who we are as a country and our unique cultural history. They help create a sense of belonging and pride in where we live, remind us of our shared past, and inspire us to preserve what we value today for future generations.

Heritage places have tangible and intangible values and are great sources of memory, knowledge, matauranga, and deep emotional significance.

### ***Benefits of conserving heritage for current and future generations***

You may laugh when I say it's not secret I'm preaching to the choir in this forum about this. But it is worth noting that the value placed on cultural heritage by the people in this room is supported by local and overseas research.

This research shows us that heritage is as much about the future as about the past, because of its great potential to increase economic, environmental, social, and cultural wellbeing.

Our unique heritage places provide tourism opportunities and create environments or precincts in which creative industries and other businesses can thrive. They create skilled jobs, with projects such as restoration and adaptation, and create demand for loans and local goods and services.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the role of heritage in helping mitigate the effects of climate change, through building community cohesion and resilience, as well as contributing to dense, walkable urban environments which exemplify sustainable development.

Conservation and adaptation of built heritage can help our transition to a clean, green, carbon neutral New Zealand and support sustainable regions to thrive.

We know heritage places foster and uplift our social wellbeing. They bring diverse communities together, they give a sense of social inclusion and intergenerational connectedness that is important for healthier, safer, more resilient communities.

Building a sense of where we came from helps foster understanding within our communities, as well as connection to our unique Māori cultural heritage.

***Our heritage faces a number of threats***

Which brings me to why we are here today. The conference's theme is an incredibly important one. There are real challenges for historic heritage in New Zealand at present.

Some of the inadequacies of aspects of our heritage protection system were illustrated for me earlier in the year when I met with Dr Naomi Simmonds (Raukawa, Ngāti Huri) to discuss what's been happening at Piraiti Pā in the Waikato.

Piraiti Pā suffered damage as a result of earthworks undertaken at the adjacent Waotu quarry. This has been a difficult situation for Ngāti Huri and Raukawa. While the Pā is currently being considered for inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero, it is not scheduled in the district plan, so it does not have the recognition or protection it deserves.

Opportunities to realise the benefits of our heritage are being lost due to vulnerabilities in New Zealand's heritage protection system. As you all will be well aware, our current system of heritage orders, listing and scheduling makes it difficult to identify and protect significant places in a timely fashion.

There are gaps at all levels of our heritage protection system in sector capability and capacity, funding for conservation and adaptation, information and guidance and research, education and promotion.

Factors outside the heritage protection system like climate change, natural hazards, urbanisation and changing regulatory settings are increasing the vulnerability of heritage places and threatening the viability of the system.

The earthquakes in Canterbury, Seddon and Kaikoura were a shocking reminder of the vulnerability of our heritage places, and have put New Zealand's built heritage in particular in the spotlight.

There are many other threats and risks to our heritage places, the most pressing of which is climate change. Rising sea levels pose the most obvious threat. We are already seeing impacts on structures, buildings and archaeological sites on the coast.

Heritage places are also threatened by more frequent and severe flooding, and increases in the frequency of extreme weather. Heritage is threatened not only by the direct impacts of climate change, but also the indirect impacts such as pressures to change land use when activities are displaced.

As well as natural hazards and climate change, the need for denser cities and greater housing supply can put pressure on our heritage places.

### ***Government investment in sector – including the Te Awe Kotuku programme***

The Government has invested significantly in the cultural sector through the Arts and Culture COVID Recovery Programme. One of the ways that this has benefitted heritage is through the Mātauranga Māori Te Awe Kōtuku programme. Through this programme, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga is delivering \$2 million to revitalise Māori built heritage conservation mātauranga and Mātauranga Māori in ancestral landscapes.

I was lucky enough to see firsthand the benefits of the funding when I participated in field work with Nga Taonga o Hinerupe who received funding and assistance through Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for a cultural mapping project to document some of their significant ancestral pā and associated kōrero tuku iho in the Te Araroa and East Cape region.

I understand that ICOMOS New Zealand was also the recipient of \$14,000 of seed funding in 2021 to identify the scope and framework for developing concise written guidance for users of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) New Zealand Charter, our recognised benchmark for conservation standards and practice.

### ***Cultural Heritage Protection***

We know that we need to be able to protect important places such as Pirauiti faster and more efficiently. That is why my officials and I are working hard to improve the heritage protection system overall through the resource management system reform.

A particularly significant aspect of the reform is improving heritage order provisions to ensure that they are a workable tool to enable timely protection of significant heritage places. I am acutely aware that despite the existence of heritage order provisions in the RMA, the tool has barely been used due to risks perceived by heritage protection authorities.

The reform work also involves increasing Māori participation and decision-making in the planning process.

### ***Issues with current RM legislation***

Balancing development needs with heritage protection is always going to be a difficult process, with the perennial challenge of how best to give weight to a range of interests.

It's no secret that The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) has not been efficient, nor has it been effective. As a system it is unnecessarily slow, costly and complex. Processes are difficult and often disproportionate to the decision being sought.

Despite its intent, the RMA has not protected the environment, nor has it efficiently enabled appropriate development. In addition, RMA decisions have failed to sufficiently recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the system has not supported appropriate Māori participation.

All of this adds up to a system that causes frustration at multiple levels, and quite simply isn't up to the task.

If New Zealand is to be in a position where we can address our infrastructure and development needs – and they are significant – then we know we need an effective system that provides more certainty and operates more efficiently.

That's why reforming the resource management system is a priority for this Government. We are confident that the reforms we are undertaking will make sure we can balance having the right development in the right place, while still protecting and restoring our environment, including our heritage.

We are committed to seeing this through in this parliamentary term by repealing the RMA and enacting the Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA), and Spatial Planning Act (SPA). For those who are wondering, the Climate Adaptation Bill is on a different timeline and is likely to be introduced to Parliament in 2023.

### ***Objectives of RM reform***

I think it would be useful here to articulate the five objectives at the heart of the reforms.

These are:

- to **protect** and where necessary **restore the natural environment**, including its capacity to provide for the **wellbeing of present and future generations**
- to better **enable development** within **biophysical environmental limits**, including a significant improvement in housing supply, affordability and choice, and timely provision of appropriate infrastructure, including social infrastructure
- to give effect to the principles of **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** and provide greater recognition of **te ao Māori**, including **mātauranga Māori**
- to better **prepare** for **adapting to climate change** and risks from **natural hazards**, and better mitigate emissions contributing to climate change
- to **improve system efficiency** and effectiveness, and **reduce complexity**, while retaining appropriate local democratic input.

Cumulatively, it represents a transformative change for us all as we shift from a system that's focused on managing adverse effects, to one that actively looks for ways to achieve and promote positive outcomes, including for both natural and built environments.

### ***RM reform process – background***

Clearly all these objectives interact closely with our heritage on multiple levels – whether it be ensuring that sites of significance to Māori are better recognised or that we are prepared for the effects of climate change on our precious heritage.

So, it's been fantastic to see the how involved the heritage sector has been in the RM reform process to date.

The engagement by key heritage advocacy organisations such as Historic Places Aotearoa (HPA) and ICOMOS has strongly guided and - most importantly - improved, the reform process.

As you will no doubt be aware, in 2019 my colleague Hon David Parker, the Minister for the Environment, appointed a panel (the 'Randerson Panel') to review the resource management system with a view to improving environmental and development outcomes.

When, at the end of that year (2019), the Panel invited submissions on initial options for reform, the heritage sector quickly stepped up and responded to the lack of heritage content in these initial options.

As a sector, your voices greatly influenced the Panel's final report, which included a number of specific recommendations relating to historic heritage.

This included that Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage should continue its Strengthening Heritage Protection project as part of resource management reform, including investigating potential provisions for national direction on heritage, reviewing heritage order provisions, and exploring options for dealing with 'demolition by neglect' issues.



### ***RM reform process – developments following 2021 commitment***

Following the Randerson Panel's final report and the Government's commitment in 2021 to reforming the RM system, a Ministerial Oversight Group – 'MOG' for short – was established and given the authority to make the policy decisions to progress the two new pieces of legislation to replace the RMA – ie the Natural and Built Environments Act and the Spatial Planning Act.

In my role as Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, I was a member of this group.

I have to say it was a pretty big task, with a group of up to 14 Ministers meeting every few weeks to review advice and make decisions on multiple policy papers, including numerous cabinet papers containing more than 1000 policy recommendations.

Government's engagement with iwi/Māori, local government and sector stakeholders on key components of the future resource management system has had an extremely positive impact throughout the development of the reforms.

When, in July 2021, an exposure draft of the Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA) – which specifies outcomes for natural and built environments – was considered by a select committee inquiry, it enabled further, significant, stakeholder and public engagement.

The select committee considered more than three thousand submissions from hapū, iwi and Māori, local government, environmental groups, and members of the public.

Incredibly, more than 300 oral submissions were heard across five weeks. These included a high number of high-quality, constructive, submissions from key stakeholders, including yourselves. My thanks to everyone in this room who contributed to these submissions – both for taking the time to be a part of this important process and for sharing your valuable expertise and insight into the heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I know that the joint submission from ICOMOS NZ and HPA, while largely supportive of the Bill, also considered that more could be done, and submitted that cultural heritage should be a mandatory matter for national direction in the National Planning Framework (NPF).

The select committee subsequently released a report with a set of recommendations based off this engagement, including that NPF should include mandatory content on all environmental outcomes in the Natural and Built Environments Act, including the cultural heritage outcome.

***Next steps in RM process – importance of submissions from heritage fraternity***

So where to next?

Shortly we will reach a significant milestone when both Bills are introduced into the house – we anticipate this will take place before the end of the year. We are just about at the last lap.

The Bills will then go through the full select committee process. This will open up another important opportunity for engagement. It's important to remember that significant and effectual change can still be introduced at this stage – and I strongly encourage you to take part in this.

We've already benefitted greatly from the input that you provided in the earlier submissions process – providing clear and compelling recommendations which we've taken on board and have helped shape our approach.

That's why we want you to submit on these two Bills when the time comes. If you see something that doesn't sit right with you, or perhaps there's an angle you think should be reconsidered – we want to hear about it. Please don't think that it's too late – it's not.

***Closing remarks***

I look forward to hearing your views on both Bills and am confident that together we can produce fit for purpose, robust, legislation that will serve our heritage and the next generation well.

There is a very full and stimulating programme over the next two days with plenty of knowledge to be shared about many aspects of heritage conservation. I wish you all very well and hope we can all connect for some valuable networking among like minds.

And I look forward to continuing dialogue to find the best ways of Government and sector to work together towards the shared goal of an Aotearoa New Zealand enriched by our historic places for current and future generations.

Thank you.