Alexander Turnbull Library Collecting Plan
Oral History and Sound: 2016-2018

Contact Person: Linda Evans, Curator, Oral History and Sound, Alexander Turnbull Library.
Email: linda.evans@dia.govt.nz

Purpose
The Oral History and Sound collection is a national collection, developed to sustain in depth research in New Zealand and Pacific studies and to preserve documentary heritage.

The purpose of this collecting plan is to describe the extent of collecting to be undertaken, and any subsequent priorities, for the Oral History and Sound collection of the Alexander Turnbull Library, part of the National Library of New Zealand.

This collecting plan was developed in accordance with the collecting principles outlined in the National Library of New Zealand’s Collections Policy.

Scope of the Collection
The Oral History and Sound collection at the Alexander Turnbull Library (the Library) is built to sustain advanced research in New Zealand studies and preserve documentary heritage and tāonga in-perpetuity for all New Zealanders.

The term oral history is used broadly to refer to a range of recorded interviews from in-depth life histories to topic-based interviews, research interviews, recorded in both audio and video formats. The word sound covers unpublished recordings of other events such as talks and readings.

The oral history collection consists of over 15,000 recordings of interviews and other events. The collection is built by donation and purchase. In addition, the Library undertakes a programme of oral history projects.

Oral history provides a framework to record those whose lives are relatively undocumented and to record aspects of people’s lives often overlooked. The recordings also provide valuable information about language, accent, inflection, emphasis and tone.

The collection is made up of recordings of individual interviews or other events, oral history projects comprising a number of interviews focusing on a particular topic or theme, and groups of interviews or other recordings which have been collected or created by a particular person or organisation. Styles of interviewing vary from structured life history interviews to more informal interviews. Most of the collection has been recorded since the 1970s and covers New Zealand social history from the late nineteenth century on.
Recordings and accompanying documentation are in both analogue and digital formats. The Library prefers to collect the original analogue recording format or the original digital file format. Recent recordings and documentation are almost all born digital.

In general, the Library’s collecting plans prioritise records of national significance. Groups of oral histories are rarely organized on a national scale. Oral histories focus on the specific experiences and observations of individuals, whether well-known or not. A group of interviews on a specific topic or locality may provide significant material about social and cultural history generally so the definition of national significance is less precise for this collection that for others.

Oral history may complement other Library collections such as the Manuscripts collection. For example, in-depth interviews with politicians or trade unionists can be considered alongside their personal papers.

Oral history projects that receive a New Zealand Oral History Award grant, administered each year by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, are required to be deposited in the collection.

Oral histories commissioned by Government organisations are collected by the Library with the prior agreement of Archives New Zealand.

**Pacific Scope:** The Library selectively collects oral histories and other recordings relating to the Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders (in addition to the records of New Zealanders active in the Pacific and Pasifika people living in New Zealand). Priority is given to those countries with whom New Zealand has a strong historical, political and social involvement and where there has been significant New Zealand activity in the Pacific.

**Antarctic Scope:** The Library selectively collects oral histories and other recordings relating to the history of Antarctica and the Sub-Antarctic Islands involving New Zealand and New Zealanders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excluded from the scope of this collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Duplicated items or collections already held by the Alexander Turnbull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library or the National Library of New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Radio and television broadcast are generally excluded except in special,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selective circumstances where they are an integral component of an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection Strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection strengths are identified as subject areas that the Library is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>already strong in. Highlights in the Oral History &amp; Sound collection include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maori collections such as <em>The Maniapoto Archive</em>, <em>Te Wananga o Raukawa Collection</em>, <em>The Maori Women’s Welfare League Collection</em>,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kahungunu Kaumatua of the 1990s and the Hiruharama oral history project

- Contemporary oral history projects where regular diary interviews are carried out with people in particular situations such as leading politicians, people who are unemployed long-term or those who sailed to Moruroa to protest against French nuclear testing

- The Sunlight Centenarians Oral History Project which recorded life histories of 23 centenarians in 1985

- Life history interviews with musicians commissioned by the Archive of New Zealand Music

- The World War I Oral Archive which contains interviews with more than 80 veterans

- Projects commissioned by a number of government departments such as the New Zealand Post Office just before or during state services restructuring. Other political and administrative changes such as the educational reforms have also been the subject of projects

- A wide variety of projects featuring health consumers and health professionals, for example, Birth Stories, NZ State Dental Nurses Institute Oral History Project and The Nursing Education and Research Foundation oral history project

- Local and regional oral history projects recorded about Martinborough, Porirua, Greater Green Island, Ngahinepouri, lower Hawke’s Bay and elsewhere

- Projects that focus on the experience of immigrant groups and ethnic communities such as Italians, Cambodians women, Jewish immigrants of the late 1930s, people from the Pacific Islands, Indian women, Wellington City Transport European immigrant bus drivers and the Chinese residents of Haining Street, Wellington

- Oral history projects from particular firms such as Fletcher Challenge Ltd, professional associations such as the Wellington District law Society and voluntary organisations such as the National Council of Women

- A wide range of projects on women’s history voluntary organisations such as the National Council of Women

- The Stout Centre Oral Literary Archive which records the voices of New Zealand writers in readings and interviews

- Interviews and other recordings by Cook Islands anthropologist Kauraka Kauraka
Collecting Principles
The National Library of New Zealand collection policy provides a suite of principles that guide all collecting across the published and unpublished collections by the National Library and Alexander Turnbull Library.

The relevant principles from the Collections Policy are provided below, with an explanation of how they will be realised for the Oral History and Sound Collection.

**Principle No. 1**

Developing breadth and depth in the Library’s research collections requires decisions to be informed by, and responsive to, current and emerging research trends as well as the anticipated needs of future generations of New Zealanders.

**Actions**

Staff working closely with the Oral History and Sound collection take an active role in the New Zealand and Pacific studies research communities, including the oral history community. This active role enables the Library to be more informed about identifying the records of today that can be useful for researchers of tomorrow.

In planning its oral history recording programme and in appraising material offered for donation or purchase, the Library considers research trends. The Library’s services to oral historians continue to encourage consideration of future research listeners and viewers by those planning oral history work.

The Library welcomes and encourages dialogue with any part of the research community, including oral historians, regarding the collection of oral histories and other recordings that support an existing or identified future research need.

**Principle No. 2**

Active engagement with iwi, hapū and whānau helps build good collections of documentary heritage and tāonga created by Māori and relating to Māori, for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

**Actions**

The Library has a strong collection of recordings with Maori, in both Te Reo and English, covering iwi, hapu and whanau history, political, social and environmental issues, arts and culture, Maori organisations and other topics.

The Library welcomes input and dialogue from Māori to ensure that oral histories and other recordings of and by Māori are collected, preserved, and made available as appropriate and to the highest possible professional standards.
Principle No. 3  The Library has an important leadership role in collaborating and coordinating collection related activities across institutional and national boundaries to enable New Zealanders to connect to information important to their lives and to support strong documentary heritage and tāonga collections for all New Zealanders.

Actions  The Library considers the most appropriate repository for a collection prior to acquisition, which can often be another institution within New Zealand or further abroad.

Potential areas for collaborative or coordinated proactive collecting will be explored with other institutions, especially when the Library’s born digital collecting capacity can be utilized, and gaps in the national documentation are identified.

Principle No. 6  The Library takes into account the cost of acquiring, storing, managing, and making accessible collection items when building its collections.

Actions  The Library’s process for approval to purchase collection items includes consideration of cost and benefit, and is followed at all times when the Crown’s acquisition budget is used to build collections.

For items that are donated to the Oral History and Sound collection, the total cost of collecting, processing, conserving, and providing access is one factor considered as part of determining the benefit to New Zealand of having the items available in perpetuity as part of our documentary heritage.

Collecting Priorities 2016-2018
The Oral History and Sound collection is built to sustain advanced research in New Zealand studies and preserve heritage taonga in perpetuity for all New Zealanders. It is not possible to collect oral histories and other recordings comprehensively across all aspects of New Zealand social, economic and cultural life.

The Library chooses to prioritise certain areas in order to focus its limited resource to build on existing collection strengths, to fill gaps in collections, or to respond to the changing needs of researchers now and in the future.

However, because of the potentially wide range of content in any oral history project, the Library will consider offers of projects on topics outside the priority areas that are well-planned and carried out and have clear agreements and other documentation.

The Oral History and Sound priorities are grouped into three categories:

**Ongoing priorities:** Those areas in which the Library strives to build on its existing collection strengths.

**Emerging priorities:** Recognised signs of an emerging research trend where the Library develops strategies to support researcher need in the future.

**Proactive priorities:** One or two areas where there is a known gap in the Library’s collection or the national documentation and the Library proactively strives to build relationships and collect in order to fill these gaps.

The Library welcome expressions of interest and donations from a range of people, communities and organisations. Current priorities are provided to give a guide on areas we are likely to prefer, given limited resources. Priorities include, but are not limited to, the list provided below.

### Ongoing priorities

1. Projects documenting contemporary issues and experiences of Maori, as well as Maori history and traditions, including recordings in Te Reo
2. Projects that focus on aspects of women’s experiences and observations
3. Projects that focus on the experiences of refugee communities in New Zealand
4. Projects that focus on New Zealand’s diverse ethnic communities
5. Working class life and culture
6. In-depth life history interviews
7. Parliamentary politics, political parties, local body politics
8. Political and social activism
9. Working life, including a wide range of occupations
10. New Zealanders’ experience of war and peacekeeping, including pacifism and peace movements
11. Projects with a focus on environmental issues
12. All aspects of the arts, including music, theatre, dance, visual arts and literature
13. Accounts and experiences of domestic life
14. Recordings of talks and other events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Projects that document varying experiences of gender and gender diversity in New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social and economic changes since World War II, including increasing social inequalities since the 1980s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proactive priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pasifika communities in New Zealand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supporting Documentation**

This collecting plan is supporting by further documentation that outlines some of the criteria, objectives and processes for appraising oral histories and sound and documenting collecting decisions.