

The Masterton District Council's decision in June 2000 to support the on-going operational funding of the Wairarapa Arts and History Centre, confirmed the way for the redevelopment of the present Centre. The decision also re-iterated an earlier three-way agreement between the Masterton Trust Lands Trust, to fund the new building, the Masterton District Council, as the major operational funder and the Wairarapa Cultural Trust as the service provider to the Council and entrusted to fulfill the aims of the Council's cultural policy.

A History – decades of debate

The search for a solution to establish a museum in Masterton has simmered on the back burner for the past decade. It was not until 1988 that the Masterton District Council began actively planning to create a museum for the region. A museum in a variety of forms has been in existence since the town's establishment but it was not till the early 1950s that things got serious. A Committee at Central School agreed that the building in Russell Street, which housed a collection of exhibits, was becoming a liability and, with the failure to find another suitable building, the contents were handed over to the National Museum in Wellington.

Following this closure in 1954, there were calls for a museum and art gallery to be built. The Masterton Arts Hall Trust was established in 1958 after several citizens had made provision in their wills to assist such a project. The Toogood family and Miss F. P. Maunsell made substantial contributions. The debate about the site for the Arts Hall went on for some time with the decision being that the Hall should be near Queen Elizabeth Park and away from traffic in the middle of town. The Masterton Trust Lands Trust began acquiring the lessees' interest in Bruce Street and a working committee of the Licensing Trust, Borough Council and the Trust Lands Trust was formed.

Sculpture Purchase

By the mid 1960s, a group of citizens led by Mr W. D. F. McPhee had an option on the purchase of a Barbara Hepworth sculpture "*Galliard – Forms of Movement*". The cost was 475 guineas and Mr Donald Thompson convinced the public that this was a good price and the ideal object to stimulate public interest in the arts. A fund-raising appeal generated half the funds required, the Maunsell family contributed the balance and the Hepworth sculpture was purchased. It was unveiled in the Thompson's garden in March 1964, as the founding piece for an arts collection.

Present Centre

The present Wairarapa Arts Centre was built by the Masterton Trust Lands Trust and opened in 1969 at a time of increased professionalism in art

museums throughout New Zealand. The decision to site the Arts Centre near Queen Elizabeth Park was made in the early 1960s when a visit to an art gallery was seen as a weekend recreational activity. Contemporary thinking is to place these institutions nearer the heart of a town or city. In 1971, the then Director, Rodney Wilson, had a visionary proposal to build an extension onto the main building with the aim of making Masterton a destination for people interested in arts festivals and cultural events. This did not pass the vision stage.

A Wairarapa Museum Society was formed in 1967, with the intention of starting a Museum of History and Technology. Although the establishment of "Cobblestones" in Greytown in 1970 took some of the steam out of the venture, the vision was on the agenda again in the late 1980s. Plans were developed in 1988 for a museum extension to the Arts Centre, but this did not proceed.

The Butts Report

In September 1991, the Masterton District Council established a Museum Steering Committee, which held a series of meetings to consider museum policy and develop an action plan. The Council then commissioned a feasibility study from David Butts, the head of Museum Studies at Massey University. His brief was *"to determine the need for and attitude of community groups and individuals, to the establishment of a history museum in the Masterton District and to advise on appropriate staff, facilities and collections and exhibition policy options"*.

Among the Butts Report 1993 recommendations were:

- The integration of the role of a history museum into the Wairarapa Arts Centre with additional staff and facilities. This development would also provide an educational facility capable of meeting the needs of local schools in the history, social studies and art curriculum areas
- That a restrictive collection policy be developed for the Centre
- The provision of appropriate professional staff be developed
- That a Museums Advisory Committee be established

Partnership

The Council's Museum Steering Committee became the suggested Advisory Committee and in October 1994, a report from the Committee to the Council recommended the development of the Wairarapa Arts Centre into the Wairarapa Arts and History Centre. The Wairarapa Cultural Trust was formed in 1996 to administer the Centre. The Cultural Trust conducted a number of focus group meetings in 1996 and presented the Council with the statement of intent and a partnership between the Cultural Trust, the Council and the Masterton Trust Lands Trust was formed.

Extensive discussion and controversy has resulted, not the least being the question of spending over \$2 million dollars on an arts and history facility. Long-awaited plans for the new Centre were unveiled to the public by the Masterton Trust Lands Trust in December 1999 at a public meeting in the Masterton Town Hall. A contract between the Masterton District Council and the Wairarapa Cultural Trust as the service provider was signed in 2000.

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The Key Players

Wairarapa Cultural Trust

The Cultural Trust's Vision is "to celebrate the unique, natural, cultural and artistic heritage of Wairarapa in a dynamic environment, which will make use of all possible resources in creating partnerships to tell the stories of who we are, where we came from and where we might go."

The new Centre will be administered by the Wairarapa Cultural Trust, which took over the running of the Arts Centre from the former Arts Foundation in 1996.

Members of the Cultural Trust Board are appointed by the three Wairarapa District Councils, Ngati Kahungunu, Rangitane, the Masterton Trust Lands Trust, the Tararua Foundation and the Friends of the Arts and History Centre.

The Cultural Trust has developed partnerships with major funding bodies, tangata whenua and the arts community to ensure the new centre will provide cultural facilities to enrich the community, in line with district council policies.

The former Arts Foundation assumes a new role as Friends of the Arts and History Centre.

Masterton Trust Lands Trust

The Masterton Trust Lands Trust was formed by the Masterton Trust Act in 1871 with its activities and operations governed by the Masterton Trust Lands Trust Act 1996.

The Trust consists of eight trustees who are elected for a six-year term. Four trustees are elected, by rotation, at each triennial local authority election. The trustees elect their own Chairman and a secretary-manager is employed to oversee daily operations.

The Trust's strategic goal is to support educational and cultural activities within the Masterton community. It does this from revenue generated from property owned in Masterton, Trust assets are worth more than \$11million and currently these produce an annual income of \$1.2million. This is returned to the community in the form of community grants, student scholarships and the

provision of many arts and educational facilities. In more recent times, this has included the building of the present Arts Centre in 1969 and the establishment of the Wairarapa Community Polytechnic in 1989.

Masterton District Council

As the major ongoing operational funder, the Council is adhering to its vision relating to arts and culture in its "Toward 2020" Strategic Plan. The Council aims to:

- offer wide-ranging opportunities for residents and visitors to increase their participation in, and enjoyment of, artistic and cultural activities
 - improve understanding and respect the contribution of the many different cultural traditions present in the district to the quality of its social life
- celebrate the unique identity of the district, enhanced by particular recognition of Wairarapa's heritage and contemporary artistic and cultural expression.
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From the Trust Lands Trust

Masterton Trust Lands Trust Chairman, Dr Owen Prior says the Trust is delighted that aratoi is now fully operational and last weekend's celebrations were a fitting spectacle to such a grand project.

"Wairarapa has a rich and varied history and increasingly it has a wonderful strong group of people engaged in a wide variety of the arts. At last we have a museum where treasures can be stored, assembled and displayed. We will never all agree on particular aspects of any exhibitions but we will all, whether local residents, school children or visitors, be able to learn more of our heritage. In addition we will be able to view traveling exhibitions which in the past have had to bypass Wairarapa".

Our district is developing in exciting ways and the opening of aratoi is another milestone. It will complement the smaller museums and display galleries already established and will serve the needs of the District for many years to come.

The Masterton Trust Lands Trust, along with other funders is pleased to have played a part in the project.

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From the Mayor

The Masterton District Council is proud of the unique three-way partnership between itself, the Masterton Trust Lands Trust and the Wairarapa Cultural Trust in bringing to the Wairarapa a new museum which can house safely our heritage and attract visiting performing arts and exhibitions.

The generosity of the Trust Lands Trust in providing such an impressive facility can not be overstated. The construction of this building is the latest in a long line of progressive Trust development in Masterton since the town was settled. The Council also looks confidently to the Wairarapa Cultural Trust to provide the smooth operation of the new centre and to provide a stimulating programme of events and exhibitions as part of the service agreement between these two parties.

The new facility sits squarely with the Council's policy to reflect the community's cultural needs by:

- providing opportunities for artistic and cultural activity
- improving understanding of the district's cultural traditions
- recognising Wairarapa's heritage, art and culture

It also meets the aims of the Council's Strategic Plan:

- to support the establishment of an arts and history centre
- to have the centre managed by a Wairarapa Cultural Trust
- to have the buildings funded without Council input

Major funders to aratoi

- **Masterton District Council**
- **Masterton Trust Lands Trust**
- **Masterton Licensing Trust**
- **Tararua Foundation**
- **Eastern & Central Community Trust**
- **Lotteries Board**
- **Juken Nissho Ltd**
- **Private donations**
- **Central Government, grant to the arts.**