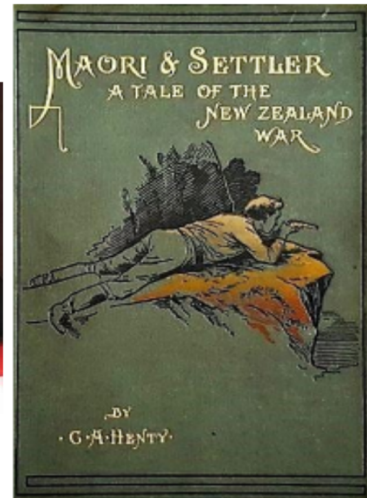


# *"Tell me a story"*

## Interpreting Our Heritage



**ICOMOS Aotearoa New Zealand  
& Historic Places Aotearoa**

**Joint Conference 2025**

**9 - 12 October  
2025**

**Napier**

## ICOMOS Aotearoa New Zealand



## Historic Places Aotearoa



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New Zealand's rich cultural heritage and history has been packaged, presented and interpreted for over 100 years.

Much has changed in this time - the audience, the purpose, the technology and method.

What has driven these changes? Have the changes been successful?

Stories can be told orally and visually, through architecture and landscapes, through signage, technology, or integrated landscapes. It is often filtered through social context and historical context. Perceptions change over time: interpretation and storytelling from 50 years ago may now feel anachronistic, or culturally insensitive, or "cringe".

We can reflect on particular ways in which our cultural heritage has been presented over time:

- Museums, from the 19th Century to now - the way in which they chose to display artefacts and objects, moving to more integrated storytelling
- The 1964 school bulletin "*Washday at the Pa*": the Te Papa website notes "The *Washday at the Pa* controversy raised a number of important points, the principal one being whether Māori people had the right to say how they were depicted".
- The Te Maori exhibition in the US in 1984
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga's digital walks and podcasts
- Movies, such as *Boy*, *The Piano*, *Once Were Warriors*, *Utu*, *Whale Rider*
- Current methods of interpretation of sites and places, using signboards, digital apps, and other media

However important questions remain

- ❖ Who gets to tell the story?
- ❖ Who's the audience?
- ❖ Who decides what the story should be?
- ❖ How does the storyteller know they've got it "right"?
- ❖ Who does the story belong to, so who has the right to tell it?

## Venue

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Our conference venue is the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Category 1 listed Womens' Rest building in Clive Square.



*Photo: New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero List entry*

## Programme

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Thursday 9 October	Midday-5pm	Field trips
Friday 10 October	12.30pm-4pm	Conference papers

	5pm	Welcome drinks
Saturday 11 October	9am-5pm	Conference papers, including short walking field trips
	7pm	Conference dinner
Sunday 12 October	9am-3pm	Conference papers