

**Issue 20**  
September 2021



# Auckland Council Archives

## Auckland begins at the Archives

### Welcome

The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on upcoming events and share information with you about new services, resources, and additions to our collections.

In this issue, we tell you about our recent office relocations, additional family history indexes on our webpage and share a new donation to the collection.

As well, we discuss various Waitematā harbour crossing proposals and make a plea for crockery.

#### What's inside this issue:

- The Archives relocations
- New family history index databases
- We hold more than just documents
- Waitematā harbour crossings
- Auckland Regional Authority crockery

## The Archives relocations

The North, West and South offices of Auckland Council Archives have now moved to Bledisloe House on Wellesley Street West.

Archives North West, which holds the archives of the city councils for the North Shore, Waitakere and all their many predecessors, moved in April from a leased building in Takapuna to temporary accommodation on two floors of Bledisloe House in central Auckland near Aotea Square.

The Takapuna office had been leased by North Shore City Council and then Auckland Council for over a quarter of a century. Preparations for the move involved almost all members of the Archives team, ensuring that archives cartons had barcodes so their locations could be changed in our database. Oversized material such as maps and plans also had to be suitably protected. With considerable assistance from Crown Relocations teams, the physical move took eleven days to complete. Over 9,500 cartons of various sizes were moved, along with forty plan cabinets housing maps, plans, aerial photographs and microfiche.

Limited shelving is available at Bledisloe House and council's Corporate Property team advised that the building's floors were not strong enough to allow more metal or other shelving to be installed. It is also necessary to avoid placing stacks of standard storage cartons more than three high (approximately 48kg in total) on the office floors at our disposal. Dehumidifiers have been placed in the four large walk-in safes on the two floors to control relative humidity. As there were good-quality metal shelves in these already, they currently contain some older material and protected records such as minute books, rate books and cemetery registers. Some mobile metal shelving, primarily designed for storage of A4-sized files and other modern records, was available at Bledisloe House and has been used for protected records housed in bespoke acid-free boxes.

The archives of South Auckland local government, created by Manukau City Council, the district councils for Franklin and Papakura, and many previous authorities that had been stored in the Manukau Civic Centre were also moved to Bledisloe House over two days in May. As well as 26 plan cabinets, over 670 cartons and folders of plans were transferred to Bledisloe House. The South Auckland archives are much larger than these figures suggest because many (over 22,000 standard storage cartons) are already held in commercial off-site storage.

Bledisloe House is only a five-minute walk from the Central City Library on Lorne Street, where archives of the local authorities of the Auckland isthmus can be consulted. Members of the Archives team can now easily work at both locations, sharing knowledge with customers and each other. Access to the archives at Bledisloe House is by appointment.



Some of the thousands of storage cartons and waxed boxes temporarily stored at Bledisloe House



New Lynn Borough Council minute books on the mobile metal shelving at Bledisloe House

## New family history indexes

There are three new family history index databases and additions to an existing database, thanks to our hard-working volunteers.

### [Onehunga Borough Council Rate Books Database 1877-1882](#)

Records from 1879 to 1882 have been added to the transcription of the Onehunga Borough Council rate books.

### [East Coast Bays Borough Council Building Permit Register Database 1954-1961](#)

East Coast Bays Borough Council was formed on 1 April 1954, having previously been part of the Takapuna Riding of the County of Waitemata. The database is a full transcription of the first East Coast Bays Borough Council building permit register, which contains applications from April 1954 to July 1961. The building permit register is handwritten and in chronological order by date of application. Street addresses for properties are often not recorded in full, usually only the street name is given. The register includes date of application, name of applicant, street name and suburb, description of permitted work, name of builder, estimated value of work, building permit number, permit fee, receipt number and remarks.

### [Turanga Road Board Rate Books Database 1883-1901](#)

The Turanga Highway Board was first established in 1865 under the Highways Act 1862 of the Auckland Provincial Council and became a road board on 1 January 1883. On 31 May 1917 the Turanga Road Board merged with the Manukau County Council following a petition of ratepayers. The Turanga Road District was located in the Whitford vicinity.

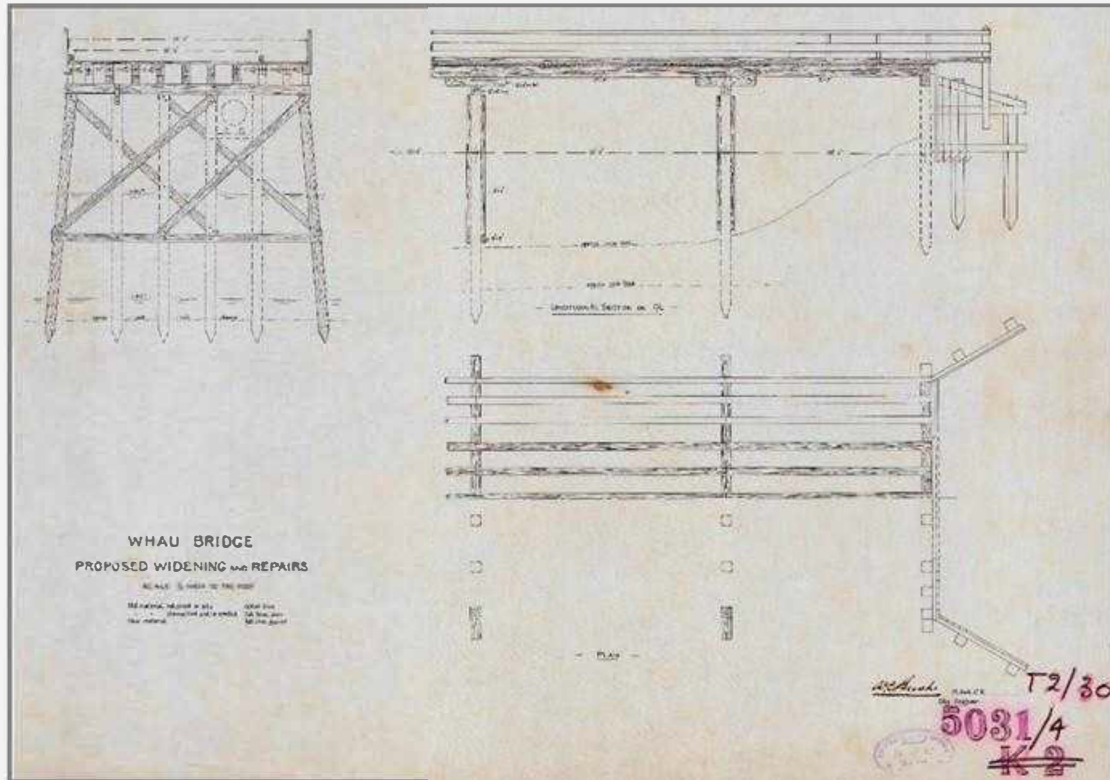
This database is a transcription of the first two Turanga Road Board rate books covering 1883 to 1901. The rate books are arranged alphabetically by name of occupier. Full street addresses for properties are not recorded in the rate books, only the legal description and area of a property is given.

### [Whau Bridge Traffic Tally Database 1920](#)

Waitemata County Council originally controlled and managed the Whau Bridge, a wooden, one-way structure completed in 1902. By 1920 costs of management and maintenance were apportioned between six local authorities - Waitemata County Council, Avondale Road Board, Point Chevalier Road Board, Mount Albert Borough Council, Mount Eden Borough Council and Auckland City Council.

A Whau Bridge Commission was created in 1920 at the behest of Waitemata County Council to report on the construction of a new bridge and apportionment of costs. To determine a fair apportionment of costs, a tally was taken of traffic across the existing bridge in both directions. Tallymen were authorised to stop and question those travelling across the bridge from 30 August to 12 September 1920 inclusive. Information from their nine tally books was used to create the printed sheets each with five columns that have been transcribed in this database.

The sheets record the name of the owner of the vehicle crossing the bridge, owners' place of business or residence, district from where and to where the vehicle was going and brief description of the type of vehicle and its load.



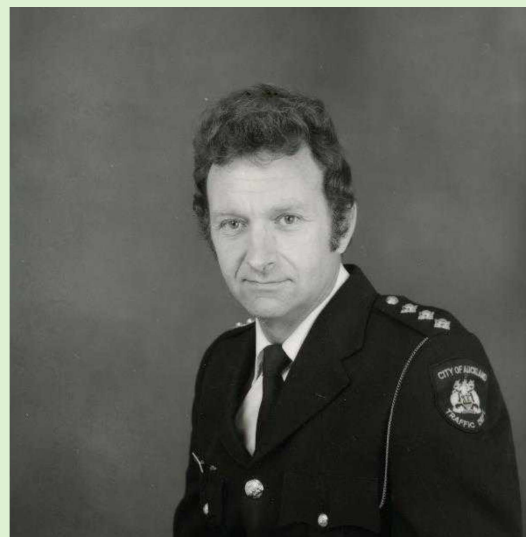
Whau Bridge proposed widening and repairs, 1921  
 [Auckland City Council City Engineer's Department plans, ACC 015/5031-4]

## Our archives hold more than documents

As well as being the kaitiaki of Auckland Council's documentary heritage, Auckland Council Archives holds some artefacts that, by association, are symbols of local government's foundation, authority, or machinery.

Recently, Graeme Lovell-Gadd (Auckland Council Building Consents North / West) donated an Auckland City Council Traffic Inspector's uniform to the Archives' collection of council artefacts. The black suit belonged to Peter Lovell, his father-in-law, and is embroidered in gold with gold studs and buttons adorned with the council's Coat of Arms.

The uniform complements the records we have on the Auckland City Traffic Department and photographs of Peter Lovell held in the archives. The black and white photograph does not do justice to the stunning gold on black of the uniform.



Peter Lovell, 1983  
 [Auckland City Council Photographic Department, ACC 497/3b]

## Waitematā Harbour crossings

Opened in 1959, the Auckland Harbour Bridge is a distinctive and crucial piece of infrastructure. The traffic incident last year which caused the bridge to close for a time and the resulting traffic chaos that ensued showed how reliant we are on our main harbour crossing. Currently, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency and Auckland Transport are looking at alternative harbour crossings. Some of the suggestions mentioned in the media, including a proposal for a tunnel under the harbour are not exactly new ideas. Auckland's traffic woes and the debate about how efficiently to move people across the Waitematā Harbour is an age-old issue which can be seen in various documents held in the Archives.

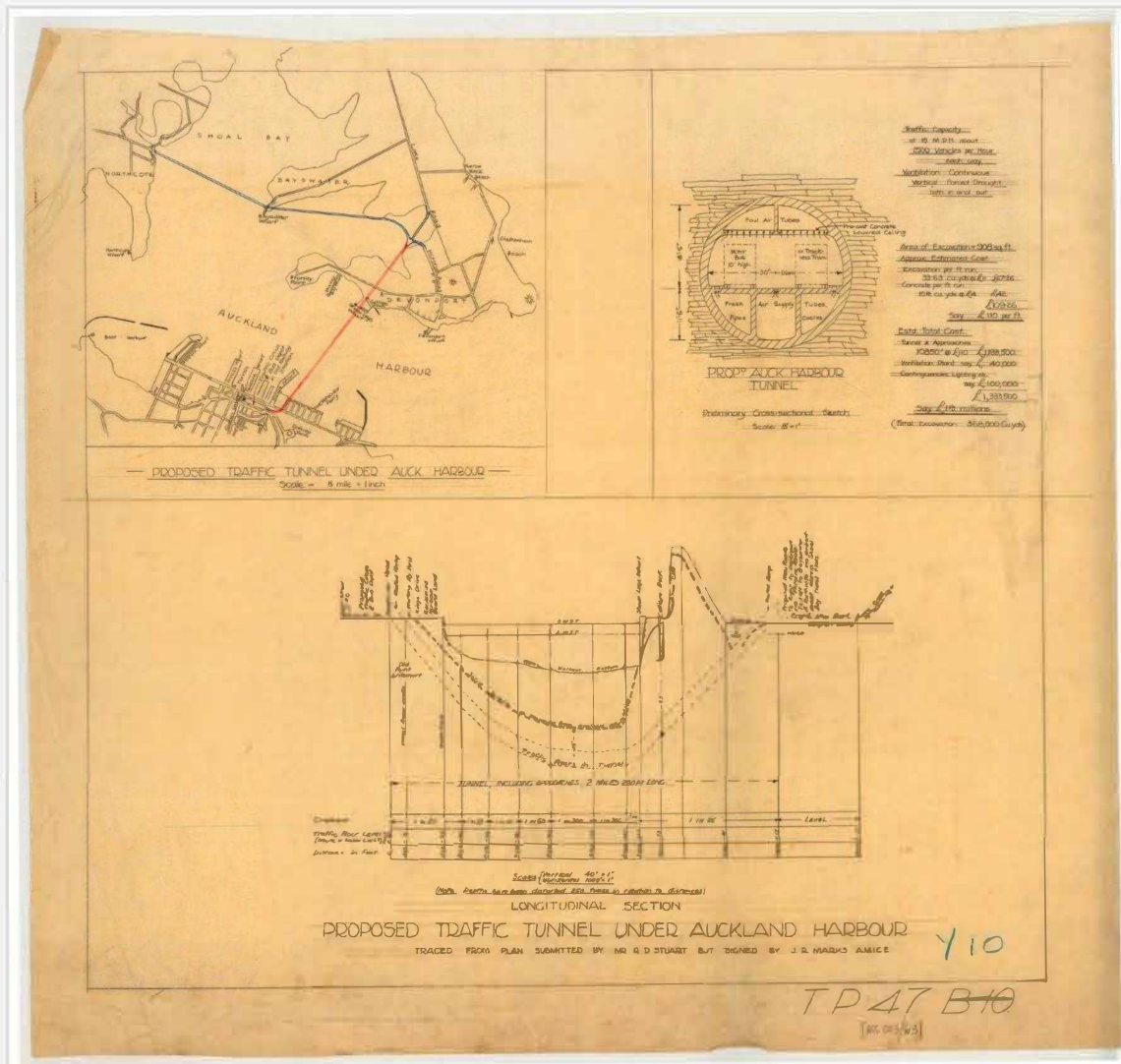
For instance, the idea of a harbour bridge was raised at a meeting of the Birkenhead Borough Council on 16 April 1919. Councillor Ernest Skeates mentioned many local authorities were discussing the idea of suitable memorials to commemorate World War I. He thought it would be wasteful spending money on building a useless object and suggested Birkenhead Borough Council should try to enlist the support of Auckland City Council and other local bodies in erecting a permanent and useful monument. Councillor Skeates thought a bridge across the Waitematā Harbour would be a fitting memorial as it would be both permanent and useful. He proposed the pillars of the bridge could be named after the principal battles of the Great War. It was resolved the Council would suggest a bridge as a peace memorial and other local bodies be asked to join in progressing the matter. [BCC 111/8/p.44]. This idea fell flat with Auckland City Council and other local authorities eventually committing to building a museum in Auckland Domain.



Birkenhead Borough Council, 1915–1917

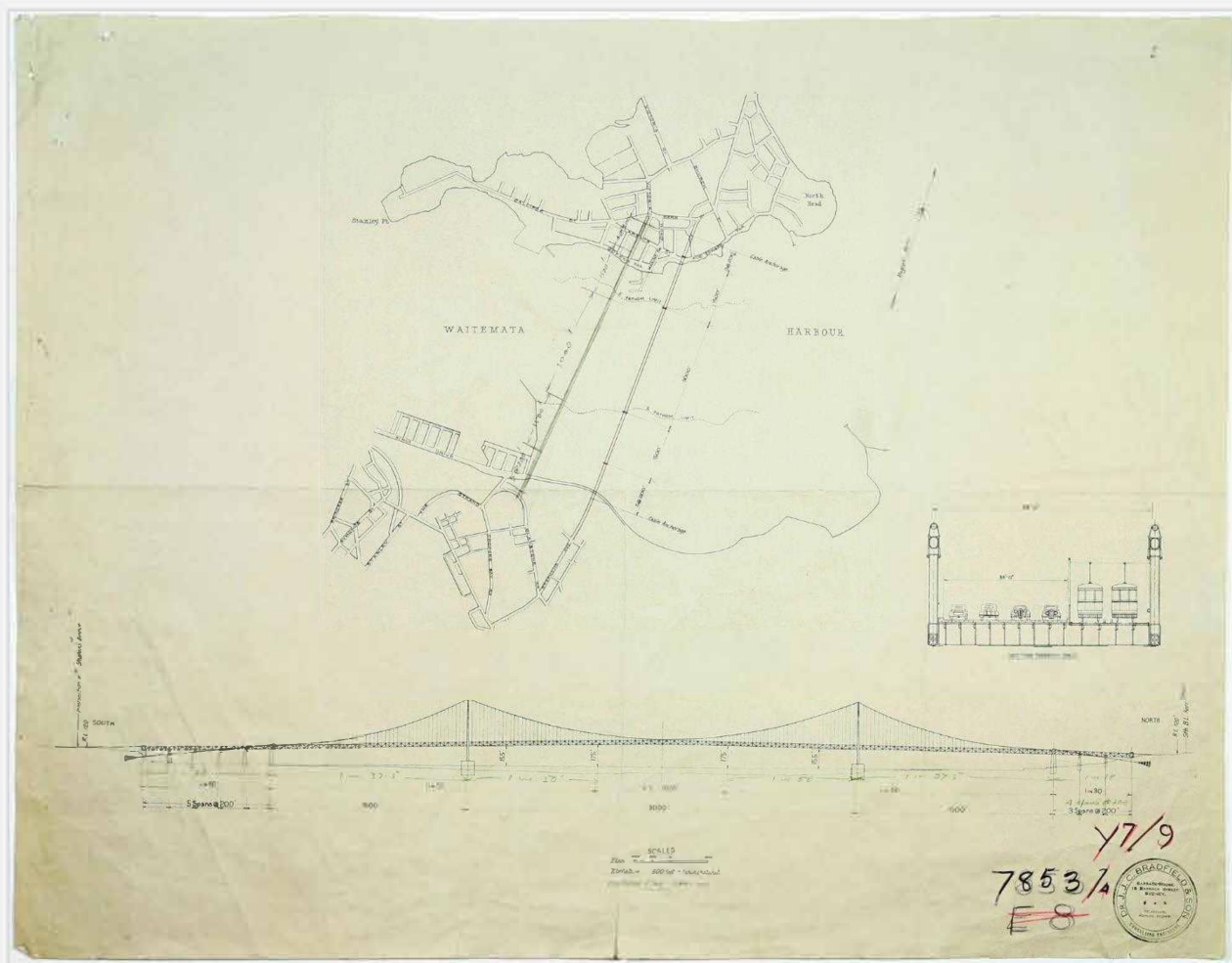
[Photographs of mayors, councillors and staff of Birkenhead Borough and City Council, BCC 485/8]

We also have plans showing a proposed traffic tunnel under Waitematā Harbour dating from 1929. The plan below shows the cross section and longitudinal section of a tunnel and is traced from a plan submitted by Mr R D Stuart to the Waitematā Harbour Transit Facilities Commission which was established by the Government to investigate Waitematā Harbour transport requirements. The Commission considered various options for bridges and tunnels but eventually rejected a trans-harbour tunnel as being out of the question due to practical and financial reasons. [New Zealand Herald, 7 December 1929, p.15].



Plan of proposed traffic tunnel under Auckland Harbour traced from a plan submitted by Mr R D Stuart and signed by J R Marks, 1929 [Auckland City Council Town Planning maps, ACC 005/63]

As well, we have a drawing dating from 1937 produced by Dr J J C Bradfield and Son. This drawing for a proposed harbour bridge includes lanes for trams. Dr J J C Bradfield was the chief engineer who prepared the design and supervised the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Dr Bradfield visited Auckland in 1937 to speak at the conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. He brought with him plans and specifications that he intended to use to illustrate his address. [Auckland Star, 12 January 1937, p.3].

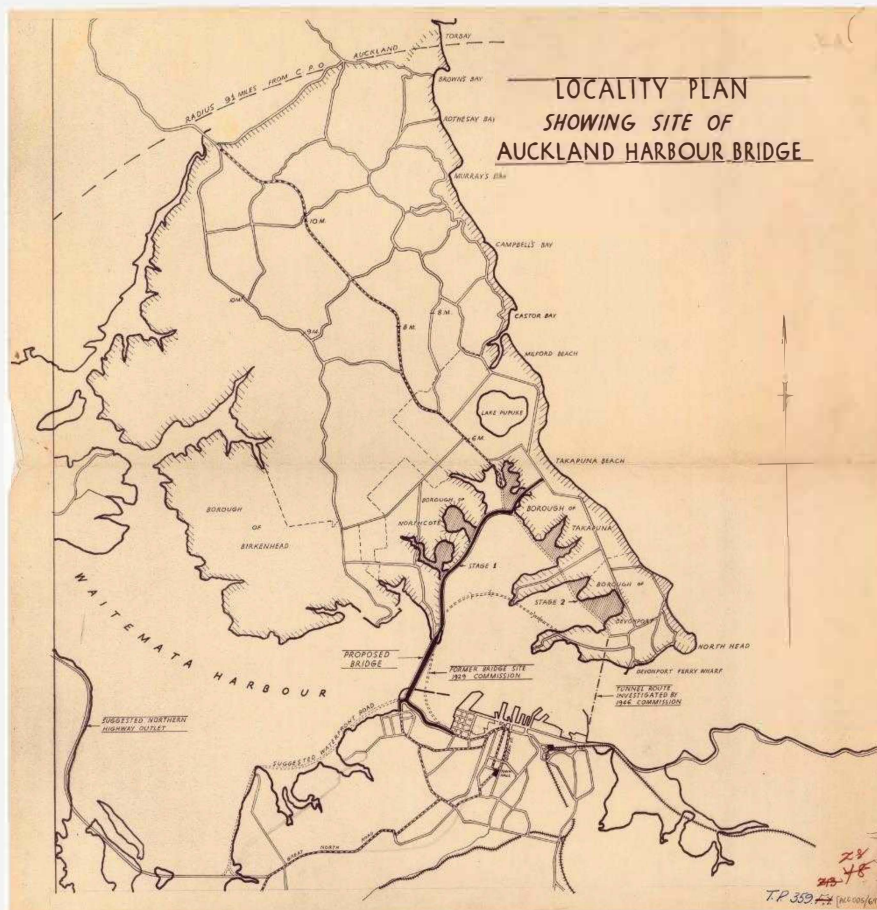


Proposed layout for bridge over Waitematā Harbour by Dr J J C Bradfield & Son, Sydney, 18 May 1937  
[Auckland City Council Engineer's Department plans, ACC 015/7853-2]



In 1939 the Auckland Provincial Centennial Committee was receiving and considering various proposals for centennial memorials. Some of the suggestions received were a Waitākere Ranges Park, an art gallery, a municipal theatre, statue of Governor Hobson, a trans-harbour tunnel, a traffic bridge over Wyndham Street and a maternity hospital. The trans-harbour tunnel suggestion was put forward by Mr R D Stewart. However the Committee eliminated both the Wyndham Street bridge and harbour tunnel on the grounds of financial impracticality. [Minutes of the Auckland Provincial Centennial Council special sub-committee, 17 February 1939, ACC 275/174-38 pt 1].

While a trans-harbour centennial memorial tunnel may have been discounted in 1939, tunnels continued to pop up in discussions regarding harbour crossings. For example, a tunnel appears on a locality plan produced by the Auckland Trans-Harbour Facilities Commission Board in 1946. The plan shows the proposed bridge site, former proposed bridge site, suggested waterfront road, suggested northern highway outlet and a tunnel route. The Commission Board considered 1,271 pages of evidence and concluded that a bridge would be needed within 15 years. They also investigated whether a tunnel under the Waitematā Harbour would be feasible, but again it was rejected on the basis of cost. [Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1946 Wātū I, D-06].



Locality plan showing site of Auckland harbour bridge, 1946  
[Auckland City Council Town Planning map, ACC 005/697]

## How many readers recognize these?

These are pieces of crockery that were made for the Auckland Regional Authority (ARA) by Crown Lynn. There were two designs made. The crockery with the ARA logo and green rim was produced in 1982, while the white crockery with the green ARA logo was made in 1983.

We have sets of cups, saucers and plates featuring both designs, plus several spare pieces which don't form complete sets. We are intending to donate a set of each design to [Te Toi Uku - Crown Lynn Museum](#). This would mean the precious collections are spread between two organisations so that in the event of some future disaster the entire collection would not be lost.

However, we've found that we don't have enough spare pieces to form complete sets to offer to the Museum. Auckland Council Archives is looking for a cup with the ARA logo and green rim to go with our spare saucer. We are also on the hunt for one of the white saucers with the green ARA logo to match our spare cup. Does anyone have any of these lurking in the back of the kitchen cupboards that they'd like to donate?

If you think that you can help us, please email [archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).



### Find out more



[aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)



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