

Oral history

- what is it, why does it matter
and how can I help

Lynette Shum
Oral History Advisor

What is oral history?



Man tape recording emu. K E Niven and Co: Ref: ½-225681-F. Alexander Turnbull Library [/records/22871788](https://nln.govt.nz/records/22871788)

Oral history



...is a record of information gathered in oral form, usually by electronic means, as a result of a planned interview

Oral history



...is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities and participants in past events

– Self Evident Tool Kit

Tauherenikau Picnic group. Evening post
Ref: EP/1958/0106-F. Alexander Turnbull
Library. [/records/23122480](https://nla.gov.au/nla:EP/1958/0106-F)

What is oral history?

**Amy Starecheski
Columbia University**

'A conversation about the past, happening in the present, and oriented towards the future'



Alessandro Portelli



- Oral history tells us less about exact factual occurrences and more about what people *thought* happened, how they felt, and what the events meant to them

Valerie Yow (Recording oral history, Altamira, 2005, p.253)



It allows you to



- Learn different kinds of information
- Learn about the perspectives of individuals who might not otherwise appear in the historical record
- Ask the questions you're interested in
- Add to the historical record

Children listening through headphones at the school for deaf children, Thorndon School, Wellington. Evening Post. Ref: EP/1959/4085-F.

Alexander Turnbull Library. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/30648185>

It provides



- Historical actors with an opportunity to tell their own stories in their own words
- Co-created
- A rich opportunity for human interaction
- Diversity and nuance

Bigwood, Kenneth Valentine, 1920-1992. Women bagging potatoes, Marshlands, Canterbury. Tourist and Publicity. Ref: 1/2-027372-F. Alexander Turnbull Library.. [/records/23027033](#)

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What is oral history?



- **Unedited**
- **Archived**
- **Long form**

Types of oral history

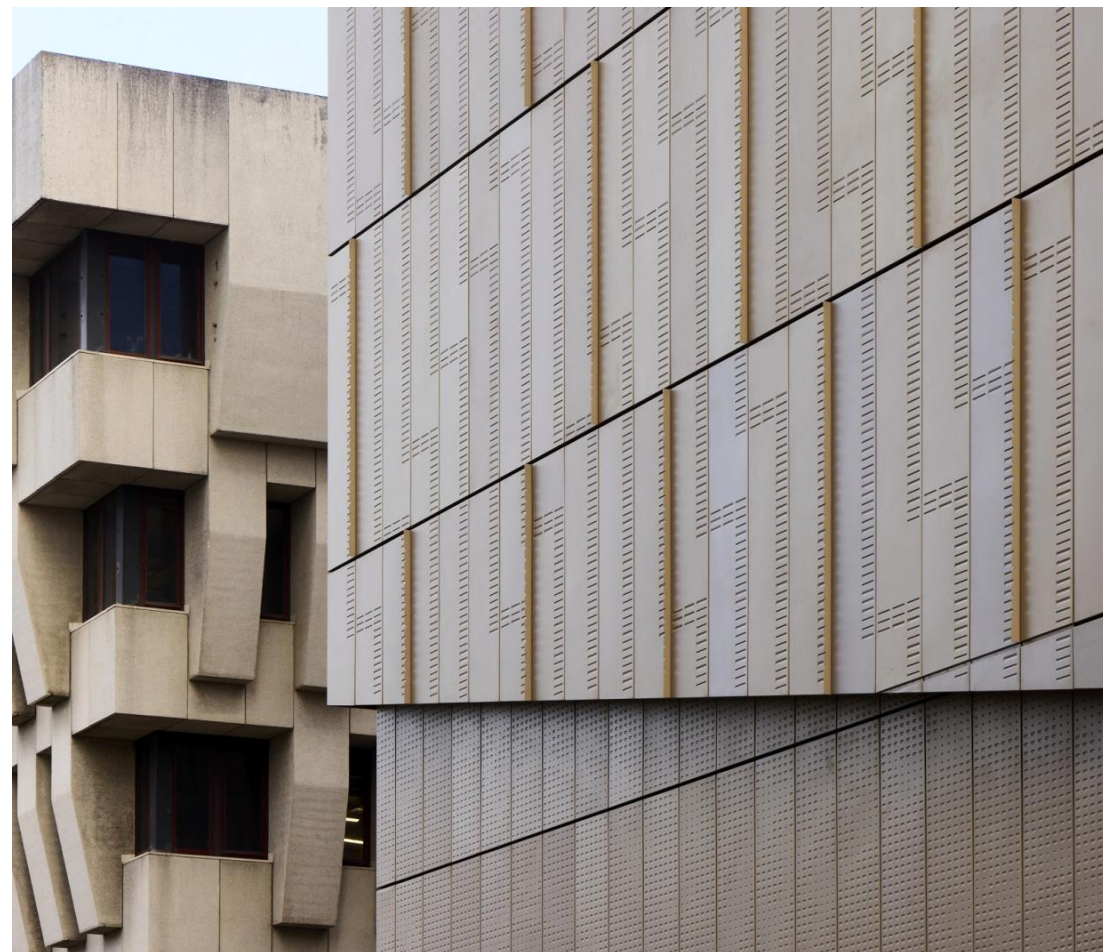


- Life
- Topic-based
- Diary

How did I get here?



Part of Community Engagement Team



Community Engagement team

Oral history advice
and support

Oral history
workshops/training

Oral history
equipment hire

Promotion of oral
history standards

Community & Iwi
archival advice &
training

Community & Iwi
preservation advice
& training

Te Tiriti education
outreach in Tāmaki
Makaurau

Promotion of
collections and
services







He mōkō o te kōwhiri
Kōwhiri ki te kōwhiri
Pōtea e hōra nei ngā
Ka ruku i te one hā
Ko te Upoko o te Ika
Hamua, Te Matehou, Puketapu

20
AITKEN STREET

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0800 270 269
1800 270 269
Aquaheat
Commercial, Retail, Industrial & Planting Services
Aquaheat
1800 270 269

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SERVICE
ELECTRICAL
MANUFACTURING
NME



National Library Loading Dock 1
Maximum Height Clearance 3.4m

The National Library of New Zealand
Dockway









- **Librarians**
- **Curators**
- **Conservators**
- **Digital archivists**

Recording oral history

The three standards



Group of women and children at Te Poho-o-Rawiri Marae, Kaiti, Gisborne. New Zealand Free Lance. Ref: PAColl-0785-1-091-001. Alexander Turnbull Library. [/records/23158893](https://records/23158893)

The three standards

- 1. Interview**
- 2. Technical**
- 3. Ethical**

Recording oral history

The three standards

- National Oral History Association of NZ (NOHANZ) Code of Ethical and Technical Practice



- International archival standards (IASA)



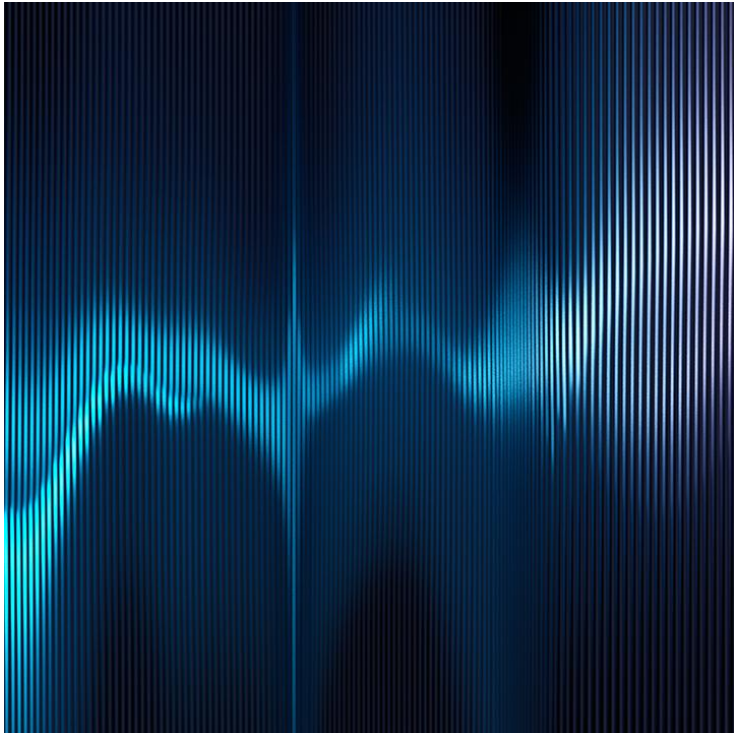
Interview standard



- **Quality of research**
- **Structure**
- **Preparation**
- **Quality of the questions**
- **Quality of the listening**

Lybia Huata, Allies Ormsby and Aroha Te Aho in their Wellington flat, 1961,
by John Ashton. Ref: JA-6140-04-F. Alexander Turnbull Library.

Technical standard



Audio

- 48 kHz / 24 bit
- Wave or AIFF
- Stereo

Technical standard 2



Video

- 4K
- quality sound
- Lighting

Ethical standard



BEFORE YOU PRESS RECORD...

The interviewee must know

- Why you are talking to them
- What you want to know
- What will happen with the recording afterwards

Miss J Breen, being interviewed by a group of women.
Reference: WA-29333-F

Ethical standard 2



NOHANZ

**Recording agreement -
Oralhistory.org.nz**

**Confidentiality unless
agreed otherwise**

Telephone exchange, operators, Eastbourne, Wellington. Evening post
(Newspaper. 1865-2002). Ref: EP/1957/2198-F.

Getting started

Advice & Training



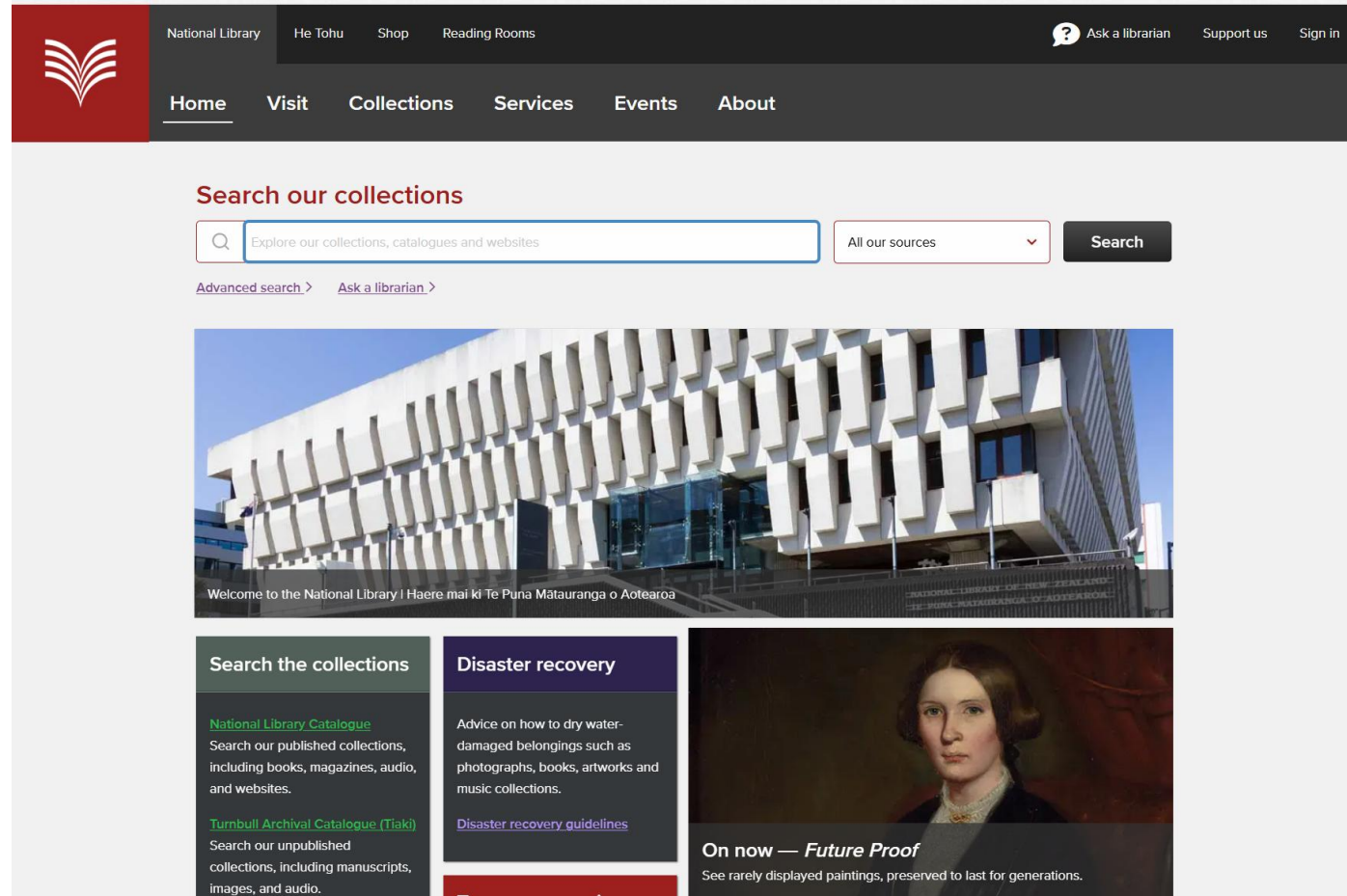
Oral history workshops



- Programmed public workshops
- Commissioned, customised workshops for groups
- Follow-up support

Looking for oral histories

natlib.govt.nz



The screenshot shows the National Library of New Zealand website. The header features the library's logo and navigation links: National Library, He Tohu, Shop, Reading Rooms, Ask a librarian, Support us, and Sign in. Below the header is a main navigation bar with links: Home, Visit, Collections, Services, Events, and About. The main content area has a search bar with the text "Search our collections" and a search button. Below the search bar are links for "Advanced search" and "Ask a librarian". A large image of the National Library building is displayed, with the text "Welcome to the National Library | Haere mai ki Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa" below it. Below the image are three columns of content: "Search the collections" with links to "National Library Catalogue" and "Turnbull Archival Catalogue (Tiaki)", "Disaster recovery" with a link to "Disaster recovery guidelines", and "On now — Future Proof" with the text "See rarely displayed paintings, preserved to last for generations."



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Search our collections

[All our sources](#)[Search](#)[Advanced search >](#)[Ask a librarian >](#)

Search the collections

[National Library Catalogue](#)

Search our published collections, including books, magazines, audio, and websites.

[Turnbull Archival Catalogue \(Tiaki\)](#)

Search our unpublished collections, including manuscripts, images, and audio.

Disaster recovery

Advice on how to

damaged by

to

guidelines

Temporary

Temporary

Temporary

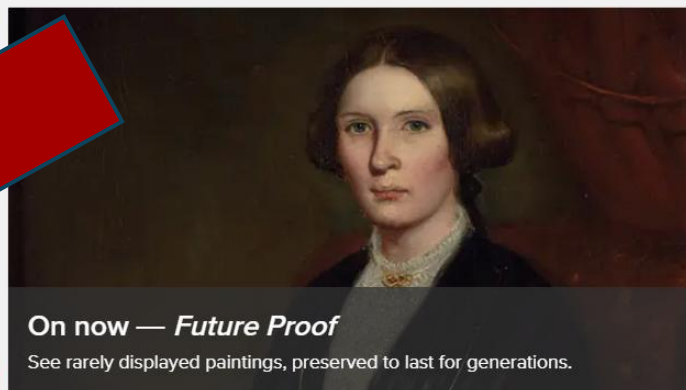
Temporary

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and websites.

Turnbull Archival Catalogue (Tiaki)

Search our unpublished
collections, including manuscripts,
images, and audio.

Image search

Search



Keyword Search:

Search

Title:

Reference Number:

Name:

Role:

(any) ▼

Place:

Subject:

Iwi/Hapū:

Type of Material:

Date From:

YYYY

Date To:

YYYY

Level:

(any) ▼

Language of Material:

(any) ▼

Search

Clear Search

Includes Digital Content: ☐

Only Born Digital Content: ☐

Only Digitised Content: ☐

[Search Tips](#)

[Help Requesting Items](#)

Kia ora! Welcome to Tiaki, the Alexander Turnbull Library's catalogue for unpublished collections

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Register to request collection items to view for your next visit to the Library, or log in if you are already registered on Tiaki.

For more information about viewing collection items in the Alexander Turnbull Library please see our [website](#).

Visit the [National Library of New Zealand's](#) website to search across the published and [unpublished collections](#) together.

From the Archives

Aileen Daly 1988
The Matriarchs Oral History Project
OHColl-0048



From the Archives



Sargettes marching team. Evening post
(Newspaper. 1865-2002) Ref: 114/275/20-F.
Alexander Turnbull Library.
[/records/22793737](#)

Aileen Daly 1988
The Matriarchs oral history project



**Ngā mihi
Thank you**

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