

# THE JOHN ROBSON COLLECTION

A Prospectus



NAPIER PILOT CITY TRUST

Napier Public Library

[www.library.napier.govt.nz](http://www.library.napier.govt.nz)

Station Street

Napier

10 Mafou  
Taiwhenua  
Kokiri O  
**Napier Pilot City**  
Mataruahou

## BUILD COMMUNITIES NOT PRISONS

Strong, vibrant and caring communities are the foundation upon which our society is built. Responsibility for ensuring the well-being of that community belongs to each and everyone of us.

Let us take up the challenge of making our communities safer and more prosperous for the next generations. People hold the key not the State.

## KIA TIPU KO TE IWI KAUA KO NGA WHARE MAUHERE

Ka ki mai koe ki ahau

He aha te mea nunui

Maku e Ki atu...

*“He Tangata, He Tangata”*

Ko te iwi whanui te Pou-

tokomanawa o te whare

Hei oranga Tinana, oranga

Hinengaro, oranga Wairua

mo tena, mo tena.

*“Whaia ti Iti Kahurangi”*

Hei ara mo apopo

*“Kei ia tatou ano*

*Te ara tika”*

## FOREWORD

There is no magic wand to overcome the difficulties many of my people are still experiencing in coping and adjusting to either colonialism or urbanisation. Maori comprise approximately 15% of the population of New Zealand, while 50% of the prison population of New Zealand is comprised of my people.



Here in Napier, "A Pilot City," with a Government mandate "to look for a community minded approach towards problem solving," there is a long term Millennium initiative, which we Iwi sincerely hope may make some difference.

At the heart of the city of Napier is its public library. One of its roles is to try to effectively and honestly share the positive news concerning our nation's history (often lost in the telling, especially when at school). This is a challenge in itself.

With the help of stakeholders in the John Robson Collection, we hope to share with our Rangatahi (young people) the building of stronger networks of community support for

times of change and stress, and to ensure a better quality of life for all the citizens of Napier, as per the Napier Pilot City Mission Statement.

I am positive, given time, you as the stakeholders will assist to make some positive difference by endorsing with us this library collection. Your collective strong experience

and commitment will show that a community can heal its people, especially if that is what a community wishes to achieve.

Please visit our beautiful Pilot City sometime, in Napier, Aotearoa, New Zealand.

*"aroha, hei karere ki te Ao"*

*"may beauty be extolled throughout the world"*

Tuahine Northover  
Kaumatua

*The concept of Robson Collection is an initiative inspired and developed by Napier Pilot City Trustees. The Robson Collection now has many supporters both nationally and internationally that are interested in, and contributing to, the development of the collection.*

*Access to key information, particularly on issues such as social justice and building safer, more caring communities, is seen as important to the development of cities and communities throughout New Zealand.*

*The Robson Collection is intended to provide relevant information in a readily*

*accessible format to assist with education and research that will hopefully contribute toward more informed debate and improved social policy.*

*The Trustees wish to ensure that the future for young New Zealanders is one in which they can achieve their full potential within a safe and knowledgeable society, and that life is lived as part of the community not within walls of prisons and other institutions.*

*Through learning, social innovation and community, positive solutions can be developed and successfully achieved.*

## RATIONALE

The Robson Collection is intended to provide resources in a designated collecting area, specifically penal policy, criminal justice and social justice.

New Zealand and Pacific Island material is considered particularly relevant to the social well-being and development of the wider community.

Overseas material also has a key role to play in informing and educating others, especially regarding initiatives and programmes that work, in order to enhance social cohesion and well-being.

The intention is that the Robson Collection will make this material available to the general public. Normally, tailored collections of a similar nature are available to a more limited group, such as university students, policy makers and/or researchers.

The Robson Collection has an educational role and a strong bi-cultural perspective. The disproportional representation of Maori in our criminal justice system, from a societal viewpoint, has to be addressed.

The gap between Maori and non-Maori in many areas, including health, education and criminal justice needs to be reduced. Maoridom has been increasingly active at the community level in establishing alternative approaches to many of these issues.

It is important that the Robson Collection obtains relevant material that provides a record of such initiatives, not only nationally, but internationally. Many indigenous cultures have well-researched material that would make a significant contribution to the depth and breadth of the collection.

From left to right: Jackie Katounas, Napier Pilot City Chairperson, Pat Magill, Napier Pilot City Trustee, Leslie Clauge, Library Manager (Napier Public Library)



# DR JOHN ROBSON

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Dr John Lochiel Robson was the former Secretary for Justice, who in 1962 was responsible for the abolition of the death penalty in New Zealand, and later became the first criminologist at Victoria University.

Dr Robson was also the chairman of the New Zealand Social Development Council. In this capacity he and the council visited the Hawke’s Bay Community College in 1977. At that time the College offered second chance learning opportunities, and some of the programmes involved opportunities for Maori. The NZ Social Development Council were impressed with the enthusiasm, ability and commitment of a small core of Maori staff, and volunteers, who were using the College as a base and training resource.

In 27 November 1987 Dr Robson called a conference at Hawke’s Bay Community College, and talked about “the futility of capital punishment and prison”. During his speech he also had words of encouragement and recognition for the work he had seen being done by local Maori, at a time when Maori struggled to come to terms with urbanisation. The NZ Social Development Council later advised the Government to establish a Pilot City and made the comment that Napier, a city of 55,000 was “not yet too large to learn about itself”. Dr Robson noted that Napier City was a place that offered hope during changing times.

At the time Anne Hercus was the Minister of Social Welfare, and on behalf of Government she designated Napier as a Pilot City, in the hope that the innovative cross boundary work which was based at the College would continue.

After a change of Government and 12 years of developing initiatives and programmes, the Hawke’s Bay Community College project concluded without ever being evaluated. During 1990 the Government advertised for “Living Treasures” (famous New Zealanders who had made a contribution in social, business and sporting fields of endeavour). The Living Treasures were part of the commemoration in our sesqui year. The Government did not acknowledge the application to recognise Dr John Robson, but he became Napier’s own Living Treasure with a collection of books named in his honour.

## NAPIER PILOT CITY TRUST

Napier Pilot City Trust was established in 1983 with the aim of reducing offending, violence and crime, and of supporting bi-cultural initiatives to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Napier.

Napier as a Pilot City was embraced and supported by local Hapu and Maori communities. For local Maori the Pilot City concept was seen as recognition of the value in having cultural differences, and the positive

alternatives that cultural perspectives offer in enhancing the quality of life for Maori. They also supported the establishment of the Napier Pilot City Trust and assisted in creating the Mission Statement and logo which appears on Trust correspondence.

Former head of Community Corrections Pam Thorburn, and former librarian Suzanne Porter assisted the Trust in advising a sub-committee of the Napier City Council, of their intention to build a book collection as a visible flagship of Napier as a Pilot City (just as buildings are to the Art Deco Trust).

## THE COLLECTION

The Robson Collection was opened in 1990 by Mayor Alan Dick, and John Harre – former Director of the Hawke’s Bay Community College.

The Robson Collection is housed at the Napier Public Library, and is acknowledged as a community initiative. The collection consists of a small, select grouping of books on restorative justice, prison reform and other materials on violence and crime, community initiatives to fight crime and violence, as well as materials on social justice. Each year it receives donations through the Napier Pilot City Trust.

## AIMS OF THE COLLECTION

Some of the aims of the collection are to act as:-

- an insurance policy for future generations;
- a resource for social learning, education and research;
- a record of local, national and international programmes and initiatives; and
- a record of bi-cultural initiatives.

The collection is intended to have an educational role and a strong bi-cultural focus. Plans for the future include the inclusion of appropriate videos, recorded interviews and development of a web site.

With the new Millennium it is intended that the Robson Collection be expanded to make it more widely accessible to the Napier community and visiting researchers, and for the Collection to be used by schools for social and legal studies projects. It is also a resource for those who strive and work towards building, maintaining and improving social and living standards in Napier.

The Trust continually seeks to expand the collection with new local, national and international material. In 1997 the Trust sent representatives to attend the International Conference on Penal Abolition (ICOPA) held in Auckland. Delegates unanimously agreed to become stakeholders in the collection, and to donate material. In 2000 at ICOPA in Toronto, delegates were again invited to become stakeholders in the collection, and again there was positive response.

## TURNING THE TIDE

When we talk about turning the tide from a community perspective – we need to clearly understand that the tide will not turn unless the community has confidence in its leaders. A good leader will recognise that communities are made up of diverse cultures. A good leader will initiate equal opportunities, encourage diversity and develop and encourage open communication.

Has the John Robson Collection worked at “turning the tide”? The simple answer is NO – but it could. For that to happen it needs to be publicly, nationally and internationally supported. This should first occur from our own positive experiences, then from you as stakeholders by donating your own experiences, information and material to the collection. We hope this will provide a micro-climate around Napier to recognise, support and encourage those few devoted people who can produce remarkable results on a shoestring budget.

In this Millennium we aim to promote the Robson Collection so that eventually every child, and every school will know its vision and purpose. From this vision we’ll enable opportunities to work towards a peaceful community that values and respects diversity. Perhaps then the tide may turn.

One of the most difficult challenges for any government is the issue of social justice, particularly in relation to crime. Responses to crime are varied and complex, but at the most basic level

they centre around punishment and retribution.

The economic cost of crime is significant, not only in terms of incarceration of the convicted offender, but also in terms of other costs such as health, welfare and victim support. Re-offending rates for people released from prison, particularly youth and violent offenders, is high. There is a growing demand for longer and more severe penalties to be imposed on violent offenders, and there is a continuing growth in prison numbers. However, research shows that more punitive approaches do not work, and that alternative strategies must be made available if we are to succeed in reducing crime and creating a less violent society.

In order to develop and implement successful alternatives, the right environment has to be created. There also needs to be a high degree of public confidence in the alternatives being undertaken. To achieve this type of outcome the community has to be well informed on the issues, and changes have to be supported by credible research.

The Robson Collection has an important role in this process if it is well supported, and recognised as a robust and valuable resource.

There is sufficient national and international interest in collecting material of a social justice nature, especially material relating to societal responses to crime, penal policy and reform and alterna-

tives to imprisonment. If managed effectively and efficiently, the Robson Collection, could become a world renowned asset. The Robson Collection will not only contribute to the processes of education and research, but will also raise the profile of Napier within the national and international community.

## COLLECTION POLICY

The policy behind the John Robson Collection is to gather, and make available, material in such formats as are appropriate including monographs, serials, journals, electronic publications such as CD-ROM and disc, video and audio tape, in the relevant fields:

- All New Zealand published information on penal policy and criminal justice policy, specifically on restorative justice, crime prevention, community initiatives and

community based sentences/ rehabilitation programmes – including material on adult offenders, youth justice and families at risk.

- Materials on Maori initiatives and response of indigenous peoples to crime.
- Materials including research papers, statistics, policy papers and published conference papers.
- Authoritative, current information on the political, economic, social and demographic environment pertinent to the penal and criminal justice area.
- Overseas material of a similar nature, in English.
- Material that provides background and historical information on local preventative initiative programmes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people within our society that have contributed to the growth and well-being of their communities. Napier Pilot City Trustees would like to acknowledge the efforts of some people that have made a particular contribution in support of this initiative.

Leslie Clauge, Library Manager,  
Napier Public Library.

Russell Fairbrother, Barrister and  
Solicitor.

Robin Gwynn, Historian and Napier  
Pilot City Supporter.

John Harre CNZM PhD, Director of  
Hawke's Bay Community College,  
1975-1986.

Joseph Tuahine Northover,  
Kaumatua.

Pat Magill, Napier Pilot City Trustee  
and Robson Collection Stakeholder.

Pam Thorburn, former District  
Probation Officer, Napier.

Te Maori Joe, Kaumatua.

In particular, the Napier Pilot City Trustees want to acknowledge the life long work of Ruth Rittenhouse Morris, born 12 December 1933, Order of Canada (Govt of Canada's highest civilian award). Her commitment to others and to society has been inspirational and through initiatives such as the Robson Collection, her work will continue.