



From the Tumuaki | Director

Kia ora koutou

We've finished demolishing the maze of twentieth century buildings at Rolleston Avenue and the contractors have started the ground work for the new base isolated basements under the Robert McDougall Gallery and the new building.

The Gallery will be strengthened with a temporary support structure and piles so that the building can be separated from the existing basement. The old basement will be demolished and excavated out to make way for the new basement.

It's well worth a trip to the Botanic Gardens to see the space that's been cleared and the work underway. The heritage buildings now stand as they would have been in the late 1870s, but connected to the Centennial Wing facade on Rolleston Avenue. With the Canaday Wing demolished, the Robert McDougall Gallery facade can be seen as it was in the 1930s.

Back at our temporary home in Hornby, the Museum team have started the detailed planning for the new visitor experience. Every element – from small displays to large exhibitions – will be developed by a staff project team. They'll be identifying the stories that need to be researched, the objects that will be displayed and whether any conservation work might be needed, and how best to display these in the new Museum spaces.

With numerous displays and exhibitions to get ready to install from the end of 2027, this is now a major focus for the team. As the plans progress we'll be giving you some sneak previews starting next month.

Ngā mihi nui
Anthony Wright



Contractors are preparing to demolish and excavate out the old Robert McDougall Gallery basement.

Closing events

Art and music

A celebratory weekend of music, art and events will bring the exhibition *Ngā Hau Ngākau (Breath of Mine)* to a close at *Canterbury Museum at CoCA* on 27 and 28 August after a 6-year tour of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The closing weekend will feature taonga pūoro performances, a talk and an exhibition tour with the artists.

Image: Mahina-ina Kingi-Kaui playing taonga pūoro at the Museum



[Event details →](#)



Coming soon

Wildlife photographers

The world-renowned Wildlife *Photographer of the Year* exhibition opens at *Canterbury Museum at CoCA* on 10 May.

On loan from the Natural History Museum in London, the exhibition offers a fascinating glimpse of wildlife across the world, taking visitors from the bottom of the oceans to the peaks of mountains.

Exhibition developed by the Natural History Museum, London



Virtual Tour

Paua Shell House returns

Fred and Myrtle's Paua Shell House is back as a virtual tour.

The new interactive experience means visitors to *Canterbury Museum at CoCA* can once again enjoy the polished pāua shells, vintage carpet and retro glory of this Kiwiana classic.

The house and other much-loved exhibits were digitally captured in high definition before they were taken down and carefully put into storage last year ahead of the redevelopment.

The virtual tour is presented on a touch screen housed in a suitably retro television built especially for the display. The tour is also available on the Museum's website.

The *Paua Shell House* will return in the redeveloped Museum. In the meantime, the virtual tour allows this popular attraction to still be enjoyed. The virtual tour includes photographs, music, video and text to recreate the full *Paua Shell House* experience.

[Take the tour →](#)

Museum hazards

Arsenic and old paint

Many objects in the Museum collection need to be handled with great care. Historically, arsenic was used to make green dye for book covers, mercury was found in clocks, ethanol preserved specimens and there was lead in paint.

In early 2023, as we were emptying the Rolleston Avenue buildings we found some other worrying issues in our storerooms and back of house areas that were not so apparent.



[Read the blog post →](#)



Pillar posts

Samurai art

A series of prints created about 250 years ago by a samurai artist depict everyday life and beauty in Japan.

Pillar prints, a form of ukiyo-e, were produced in large numbers in Japan from the mid-1700s. The long, thin woodblock prints were used to decorate the interior pillar posts of Japanese houses and hung in alcoves.

[Read the blog post →](#)

 **Canterbury
Museum**



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