

Script for Whakawātea

Tēnā koutou
Tēnā koutou
Tēnā koutou katoa

Greetings to you representatives of the rūnaka o Puketeraki, Moeraki aa Otakou who have:
- led us in this whakawātea,
- told us of the story and significance of this place, this ground we stand on, on the banks of Owheo.

Thank you for making those traditions resonant within the walls of this building - in a very real sense - Te Puna Mātauranga – enriching and blessing these spaces for those who drink deeply of the spring of knowledge and wisdom. Takata he mōhio, takata he pai (A person of knowledge is a fine person.)

Greetings and thanks to the representatives of our design consultants who joined with us in developing the vision for this extraordinarily exciting building of such splendid form. We are indebted to you David and Jeff.

We are very conscious this morning of the absence of Norman and Stephen and others of the HHPA team still in California.

Greetings and thanks to our project management consultants who helped us keep this project on track – and accomplish our vision. William and David have provided splendid support. Greetings and thanks to the contractors, Naylor Love, and all their many sub-contractors who have in concrete and glass, fibre and timber provided the secure and handsome housing of this place.

And greetings and thanks to the many consultants who have provided professional services to this mighty project.

Chancellor Eion and Council Members,
Vice-Chancellor Graeme and members of your Advisory Committee,
OUSA President Ayesha and fellow members
University staff assembled here,
My whānau within the Library

You have our gratitude for your steadfast commitment to our vision and the realisation of this project.

Members of the Information Services Building Working Party who have been chief advisers on the project to the Vice-Chancellor and the Campus Development Committee we thank you - and it is here we recall with sadness but also with praise the fine contribution of its first Chair, Roger Dodd, who died last May.

This building is a splendid achievement. It is not only a splendid achievement in Dunedin or New Zealand. It is not only a splendid achievement in Australasia.

This is a world-class building and it has been made so by the vision, the dedication of all who contributed to it – from the focus groups of students and staff on campus in 1995 and 1996 working with the design consultants, the user groups and the working party to retain flexibility in the project just as long as we could so that we didn't end up in 2001 opening a building which had 1996 values and aspirations.

This building is not only for now but it is for the future since flexibility as well as functional efficiency are enduring values woven in at every stage of planning.

This building proclaims at large the high value that the University places on access to information and knowledge.

This building gives the University a clear marketing advantage over other New Zealand universities.

This building assists in positioning the Library well to meet the challenges of the early 21st century with significant changes currently occurring in scholarly communication.

This building assists us to take advantage of burgeoning IT developments in easing access to information and knowledge appearing in digital form.

This building conveys a sense of excitement that one is entering a gateway to the world of information and knowledge (not only to resources housed within the building but also providing access to resources, both print and digital, beyond the walls of this building).

This building fosters vital intellectual interchange between students and between students and staff.

This building provides a welcoming environment, comfortable to be in, of a human scale (even though it has a footprint the size of the Carisbrook ground).

The purpose of the building is revealed, indeed, proclaimed to passers-by.

Against the pattern of most academic libraries, we have provided for a significant sociable element within the building encouraging people to congregate and talk freely, to discuss their learning and their personal issues, with refreshments being available in certain areas even as they study.

All these elements are not at the expense of the traditional quiet study areas. The building is cleverly designed to provide for a whole range of study situations including group study rooms, study places which are wired so connections can be made to the University network to those which are quiet oases where we anticipate only users of print materials will congregate.

There are also study places where viewing of audiovisual resources singly, in small clusters, or in a small theatre, and where interaction with digital resources is possible. Books are well catered for in this building for the hybrid library is where we are heading for a long time yet. This means an appropriate blending of print and digital, choosing one or the other (where alternatives exist, indeed) on grounds of price, currency, authority, eligibility, speed of delivery, format most useful to the user.

The Library is housed proximate to other IT and student services to encourage greater collaboration and derive optimal benefit from the synergies created.

A new feature of this building is the Help Desk offering IT help in association with the more traditional Reference/Information desk.

Another is the Information Commons where students have access to library electronic databases, the internet, course notes, the student desk top and all that it provides access to.

Michael Wooliscroft (University Librarian), 15 October 2001.

The new Student Learning Centre is also a service to students which will be enhanced by synergies developing between the Library, HEDC, and ITS. Audio/video-conferencing facilities are adjacent, as are Careers, Proctor and Campus Cop.

There is a front desk introduction to a wide range of the University's student services housed in the clock-tower building.

The connection with the University Union is an important one in this regard for the Link is a vital connector between the University Union, which is the social hub of the campus, and the Library, which is the learning hub, and it contains elements of both, one melding into the other.

Altogether, we know that this is a courageous development. Otago has achieved a building well ahead of any university library/information services building in the country. We expect there will be imitators.

What is important is for us to be the first of a new breed and then to have:

- the inventiveness
- the commitment to best practice, and
- the ongoing resources to maintain that lead even when others' imitations are commissioned. That will be the true challenge for the Library, other services operating from this building and for the University Council.

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Michael Wooliscroft (University Librarian), 15 October 2001.