

# Appraisal Report

## Legacy Functions, activities and records evaluation for KiwiRail Holdings Limited, Christchurch

<b>File/Document ID</b>	APP2017/0022; CHJ2017/5
<b>Agency</b>	KiwiRail Holdings Limited (trading as KiwiRail), South Island Network Services, Christchurch
<b>Contact Name and Details</b>	[Name removed]
<b>Date</b>	10 August 2017

<b>Purpose</b>
<p>Late in 2015 the KiwiRail office in Christchurch decanted the contents of its records room on to pallets to be stored in a KiwiRail warehouse at Middleton. [Name removed], Archives New Zealand, Christchurch Regional Office was concerned at the conditions in which the material was stored and KiwiRail agreed to move the pallets to Archives NZ Christchurch on the understanding that they would eventually be appraised and disposed of. While KiwiRail had indicated it had no further administrative use for the material, following the Kaikoura earthquakes it eventually took back all files relating to tunnels and bridges on the Main North Line.</p> <p>Archives New Zealand, Christchurch Regional Office needs to have the disposal of the records authorised so that it can destroy (or discharge) them or absorb them into its holdings well before the shift to Wigram. While many Railway records have been transferred to Archives New Zealand, there is no current relevant disposal authority and the completion of a new disposal authority by KiwiRail seems to be some time away. The recommendations apply only to material currently stored in the Christchurch repository of Archives New Zealand.</p>
<b>Scope</b>
<p>Approximately 50 linear metres of registered files originating in the District Engineers' Offices in Dunedin and Christchurch, covering lines and stations throughout the South Island, as well as three pallets of roll plans. The records span the years 1900 to 2000 with most of the files being over 25 years old. There are also some records from the Area Administration Office based in Christchurch.</p>

<b>Format</b>
Paper files and plans.
<b>Function/Activity Information/Collection</b>
<p>The bulk of the records originated in the District Engineer's Office (DEO) Dunedin and its counterpart in Christchurch, as well as the Area Administration Office in Christchurch.</p> <p>As a national successor to the provincial railway organisations a separate Railways Department was established in 1880. This was divided into several branches, with the Chief Civil Engineer responsible for track and bridge maintenance – the Permanent Way <sup>1</sup>(the actual construction was carried out by the Public Works Department). Local District Engineers represented the Chief Engineer in the regions. By 1968 the Invercargill District Engineer's Office had been absorbed by Dunedin and from 1982 structural changes brought Dunedin DEO under the control of the Christchurch District Engineer's Office. Between 2002 - 2004 then- owners Tranz Rail outsourced track maintenance and relevant files were transferred to the contractors, however, in 2004 the Government re-purchased the infrastructure network and the records were brought back under the central control with ONTRACK, a subsidiary of the new NZ Railways Corporation. In 2008 KiwiRail became the new trading name for the corporation. A restructure of the Crown's investment in rail operations and a change to the Corporation's role took effect from 31 December 2012. That restructure transferred the KiwiRail business into a new corporate group separate from the Corporation – KiwiRail Holdings Limited and its subsidiaries.<sup>2</sup> KiwiRail Holdings Limited is the new parent company for the group. Network services for the South Island are administered out of Christchurch at KiwiRail's offices at Middleton.</p> <p>The demarcation between the areas controlled from the Dunedin and Christchurch DEOs has also changed over the years.</p> <p>As to be expected given the changes outlined above, the records display a degree of re-covering and top-numbering, but the same files have been in use for extended periods regardless of the administrative changes and most of the records under appraisal adhere to the NZ Rail Limited's records classification system, in which stations were allocated unique numbers and standard subject numbers dealt with various aspects of the network's interests (e.g. sidings and yards, signalling and interlocking, power supply and so on).</p> <p>These records do not represent a comprehensive set of records from the various offices that created or controlled them and their survival in KiwiRail's hands may indicate this subset contains disproportionately high archival value.</p>
<b>Methodology</b>
<p>This was necessarily an ad hoc appraisal designed to deal with a specific local situation and fill a gap until the material KiwiRail disposal schedule had been put in place.</p> <p>There was no prospect of a list at the time of transfer (and all the files were inadequately boxed</p>

<sup>1</sup> Definition of Permanent Way - the finished trackbed of a railway together with the track and other permanent equipment

<sup>2</sup> New Zealand Railways Corporation, annual report 2015

and out of order) but many of the records fall into a small number of files sub-series and inspection was confined to a few examples from each type. Archives New Zealand will complete sentencing of the files once the schedule is approved, and re-box and list the remaining files. Files clearly covered by General Disposal Authority 6 have already been destroyed with KiwiRail's approval.

Similar records held in the other regional offices were reviewed and where necessary Christchurch examples inspected. There have been a large number of accessions transferred by the various offices and incarnations of NZ Railways over the years, some of which contain previous file parts of the records under appraisal, but there was usually little in the way of documentation, and often no consistency in the disposal decisions.

The long term relevance of records documenting the Permanent Way was sharply illustrated during the appraisal process by the aftermath of the Kaikoura Earthquake, in which the agency took back files dealing with the tunnels and bridges of the Main North Line to help with its work in re-opening the line. Currently North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery (NCTIR) is also researching the archival holdings to aid in its work of fixing the damaged infrastructure.

Three appraisal criteria from the Appraisal statement are most relevant to the records under appraisal:

*Criteria 1. Business value*

*Information and records that are fundamental to the ability of a public office or local authority to carry out its business and enable continuity of services to the New Zealand public.*

*Criteria 2. Accountability*

*Information and records that are fundamental to providing citizens with trust in government; providing evidence of the well-being of the community and the impact of government activities on them, in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.*

*Criteria 6. Knowledge*

*Information and records that will substantially contribute to knowledge and understanding of New Zealand, its history, geography, society, culture and achievements and New Zealanders' sense of their national identity.*

While the last has a more substantive relevance to the appraisal of these records, the manner in which they became available for appraisal, as well as the long-term nature of the infrastructure they document, has meant that business value and accountability have a continuing role in determining disposal.

The New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society has expressed an interest in having unrestricted files not scheduled for transfer to be discharged to their care.

## **Consultation**

For the current use of the material to KiwiRail and the differing values of regional and Head Office files [Name removed], who had previously been involved in the appraisal of railway records in Dunedin, provided valuable advice throughout the process.

[Name removed] for KiwiRail, who is currently developing a national schedule for KiwiRail, was also able to provide advice and a copy of the draft schedule.

Two established local railway researchers: [Name removed] and [Name removed] (the NZ

Railway and Locomotive Society) were able to provide information about likely long-term values for the various series. They were also able to discuss the society's interest in receiving records discharged under Section 25 of the Public Records Act 2005.

## 1. Tunnels, bridges and earthworks

### Description

Records relating to the infrastructure that carry the Permanent Way through hills and over rivers and protect it from the environment. The files document the maintenance (they were generally constructed by the Public Works Department and handed over to Railways) of these structures enabling passage of the railway line. They can include inspection reports, proposals for alterations, historical records of construction and repair, as well as records of routine maintenance and they were filed together.

### Value statement

These records document some of the most historically (and currently) important infrastructure in the region and some are a record of significant engineering feats, and their current value is also high as these records are fundamental to an understanding of the development of railways in New Zealand.

These series of records have been identified by the business as having long term value to KiwiRail for as long as the structure is in place. This was exemplified during the aftermath of the recent Kaikoura earthquakes when all tunnel and bridge files for the main North Line were retrieved by KiwiRail, and by the subsequent research carried out by NCTIR.

However, the records documenting the structures have a value beyond the life of the railway line itself as the structures will survive the removal of the line and may continue in use or at least existence.

The tunnels, bridges and earthworks will continue as significant items in the landscape and may be re-purposed (e.g. for cycle trails). Their continued use will also bring the need to consider safety of the structures. Protective works and embankments were often the final resting place for surplus rolling stock and locomotives (e.g. at Oaro near Kaikoura ). All of these records have a demonstrated research value.

Records in this class meet the Appraisal Statement criteria for Business Value, Accountability and Knowledge.

### Disposal recommendation

Transfer to Archives New Zealand when no longer of administrative use

## 2. Stations and yards

### Description

These records relate to the construction and maintenance of railway stations and their surrounding areas and properties, including sheds, wharves, passenger and goods yards, sidings, railway houses, drainage, signalling arrangements and power supply. Over the years each station acquired a range of related files whose breadth depended on the importance of the station. Stations were given unique numbers and the main files were stored with their related component files, which were given standardised classification numbers.

### Value statement

In major regional centres such as Greymouth, Blenheim and Picton these records document substantial parts of the town's infrastructure, while in rural areas the stations and yards often formed the hub of a small community. In both urban and rural areas the stations and yards formed a significant part of the landscape and economy and have been of continued interest not only to Railway enthusiasts but local historians. Many of the buildings are still standing but have been re-purposed, while the yards have often been obliterated by later development, leaving the documents as the only evidence of their existence. There is always the potential for contamination to have occurred in the yard areas so access to relevant documentation may be needed far into the future.

While files about significant structures have a clear and continuing research interest as long as they are not entirely devoted to minor routine maintenance, the research value of some of the other related files is variable. For example, records about station and yard drainage can provide significant information about station surroundings in rural areas; while files on the supply of electricity to stations are mostly of a routine nature, some on major projects in urban centres document significant elements of urban infrastructure.

Records in this class which have been recommended for retention as public archives meet the Appraisal Statement criteria for Accountability and Knowledge.

The sub-series documenting 'Signals and Interlocking' for each station have been sometimes kept as public archives in past appraisals as these files contain evidence of the installation and significant changes to signals, but these files have a narrow research interest. They may be best served by being discharged to one of the Railway societies.

### Disposal recommendation

- Records documenting the construction and significant maintenance of station and yard structures, including the provision of power and drainage - Transfer to Archives New Zealand when no longer of administrative use

- Records documenting minor maintenance work on station and yard structures, including local signalling arrangements and power supply, fire protection - Destroy or discharge to New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society

Note: The records that are recommended for discharge do not contain personal information and are open access. Therefore, they meet the conditions of Section 25 of the Public Records Act 2005.

### 3. Permanent way (railway track and land management)

#### Description

Files related to the condition and maintenance of the railway line itself, services crossing the rail line, as well as adjacent property. All files about Town and Country Planning and land acquisition and disposal have been included in this class.

The records include land acquisition, routine track inspection reports; track repair or replacement documentation; track maintenance equipment correspondence; sleepers and ballast; as well as documentation of services crossing the railway lines, such as power lines; maintenance of trees and bushes encroaching on the line; permits to enter or use Railway property; fire protection correspondence; Town and Country Planning files.

#### Value Statement

These records deal mainly with the railway line itself and the land through which it passes and largely document routine maintenance matters. However, land acquisition and disposal files have a value even at the regional level because historical structural changes within the organisation mean we now cannot be certain they have been kept elsewhere. Land ownership bordering the permanent way remains an active issue within the region.

They provide evidence of the acquisition and disposition of land by the New Zealand Railways Corporation (and predecessors) and have a significant historical value with regard to the history of where and when land was purchased by the government.

Records in this class which have been recommended for retention as public archives meet the Appraisal Statement criteria for Business, Accountability and Knowledge.

Records relating to routine maintenance, repair, access and inspection are low level operational and have short term business value only.

#### Disposal recommendation

- Land acquisition or disposal files – Transfer to Archives New Zealand when no longer of administrative use

- All other files - Destroy or discharge to New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society

Note: The records that are recommended for discharge do not contain personal information and are open access. Therefore, they meet the conditions of Section 25 of the Public Records Act 2005.

<b>4. Branch lines and private sidings</b>
<b>Description</b>
<p>This class covers files relating to applications for, construction and demise of and significant details about private sidings, which have usually been constructed at the request of private firms to allow the easy transportation of goods to the market. Examples would be the numerous sidings in Canterbury to flour and flax mills as well as freezing works. It also covers files documenting to the construction and demise of lines other than the main trunk lines. These branch lines can be quite short, such as the line from Greymouth to Rewanui, or regionally significant, such as the Stillwater to Westport line.</p>
<b>Value Statement</b>
<p>The branch lines and sidings played an important role in the economies of regions and localities. Particularly, government decisions on opening and closing branch lines and sidings impact the community and their economies. This class provides evidence of how government responded to the regional communities and their economies through the decisions in the past.</p> <p>The records in this class also have potential to substantially contribute to the body of knowledge and understanding of NZ railway history that has been impacted by a result of the changes in transport technology and society.</p> <p>There is also a proven interest among researchers in private sidings and branch lines, not just among railway enthusiasts but local historians in general.</p> <p>While some information within the records may not have long term value to retain as public archives, these files need to be retained as a whole as the records are filed together.</p> <p>Records in this class which have been recommended for retention as public archives meet the Appraisal Statement criteria for Accountability and Knowledge.</p>
<b>Disposal recommendation</b>
<u>Transfer to Archives New Zealand</u> when no longer of administrative use

<b>5. Railway traffic</b>
<b>Description</b>
This class covers those records relating to the passage of trains, including timetable information, derailment and accident reports, rules and regulations, manuals, complaints, correspondence and reports regarding traffic control and decisions about individual trains.
<b>Value Statement</b>
While some of this material has been kept regionally in the past, it is clear that anything substantive has been transferred at Head Office level - for example, accident reports and reports on derailments. Therefore, these records do not have archival value.  While there is a proven research interest in the minutiae of train timetables and similar details relating to passenger and freight trains by specific interest groups, there is no substantial value in retaining these as public archives as they contain a low level of operational information.
<b>Disposal recommendation</b>
All files – <u>Destroy or discharge to New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society</u>  Note: The records that are recommended for discharge do not contain personal information and are open access. Therefore, they meet the conditions of Section 25 of the Public Records Act 2005.

<b>6. Roll plans</b>
<b>Description</b>
This class covers all roll plans covering stations, yards, wharves and railway structures such as bridges. The material offered for appraisal was removed from pigeonhole shelving and placed in boxes roughly in subject order, the subject being the location covered in the plan. All plans have a sequential number stamped on them but the controlling registers have not been made available at this point. There is no listing. Dates range from c.1900 to the 1950s. Those covering stations include yard and station layout and document changes over the life of the station and include information about changes in land ownership.
<b>Value Statement</b>
The records under this class are recommended for transfer to Archives New Zealand as the records provide evidence of all major alterations made to the asset over its lifetime, that affects how it is maintained and monitored, and the rationale for those changes.  These records contribute to the knowledge and understanding of New Zealand railways infrastructure development. They also provide evidence of how government maintains the New Zealand railway infrastructure and they have a significant historical value with regard to the history of land ownership. They provide substantive and easily accessed information on railway infrastructure and on the communities in which they are located. There is proven research interest in these records that is not confined to railway enthusiasts.  These meet long-term Business Value, Accountability and Knowledge criteria.

### **Disposal recommendation**

- Original plans providing substantive information on Railway infrastructure in the region – Transfer to Archives New Zealand when no longer of administrative use

- All other plans - Destroy or discharge to New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society.

Note: The records that are recommended for discharge do not contain personal information and are open access. Therefore, they meet the conditions of Section 25 of the Public Records Act 2005.

### **Access Recommendations**

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