



## The Historic Places Act and the protection of archaeological sites

Under the Historic Places Act 1993 (HPA) an archaeological site is defined as any place associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there is material evidence relating to the history of New Zealand. This includes pre-1900 buildings and other structures.

It is unlawful for any person to destroy, damage or modify the whole or any part of an archaeological site. Section 10 of the HPA directs that an authority is required from the NZHPT if an archaeological site (recorded or unrecorded) may be modified, damaged or destroyed in the course of any activity.

### Emergency authority

Under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 a simplified and streamlined process has been set up to quickly consider work that affects archaeological sites. This is done under the Canterbury Earthquake (Historic Places Act) Order 2011. A [special application form](#) is available on the NZHPT website: go to [www.historic.org.nz](http://www.historic.org.nz), click on Protecting Our Heritage in the top navigation bar, then click on FAQs post-Earthquake in the navigation bar on the left of your screen.

All work carried out on buildings or sites that have been affected by the Canterbury Earthquake that may affect archaeological sites within Christchurch City Council and Selwyn and Waimakariri District Councils has to be processed under the Canterbury Earthquake (Historic Places Act) Order 2011. For example the demolition and partial demolition of pre-1900 buildings, foundation removal, repair work or seismic strengthening of pre-1900 buildings that have been affected by the earthquake, redevelopment of sites that have been affected by the earthquake, or undertaking earthworks to repair earthquake damaged infrastructure such as roading, water or sewerage.

You will be informed in writing of the NZHPT's decision within five working days if the application relates to a site of interest to Maori and within three working days in all other cases.

If granted, there is a stand down period of 10 days before an authority can be exercised if the decision relates to a site of interest to Maori, to allow for any appeals to be lodged.

In all other cases an emergency authority can be exercised the day after the date of determination of the application by the NZHPT.

### Contact

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