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Auckland Museum surprised at allegations it's attempting to prevent the Hillary family from accessing Sir Edmund's documents

Auckland Museum is surprised at allegations it's attempting to prevent the Hillary family from accessing Sir Edmund's documents, and empathises with the strong reaction of the New Zealand public.

The Museum wishes to stress that it has not been taken to court, and is not taking anyone to court. Nor has it at any time prevented the Hillary family from accessing their records.

"Peter and Sarah Hillary have initiated proceedings against the legal executors of their father's will, not against Auckland Museum. The museum appears to have become stuck in the middle of a debate involving outside parties," says Auckland Museum Director Dr Vanda Vitali.

"We're very surprised about this situation, particularly to hear that Peter and Sarah are unhappy. The Museum has a very close relationship with the Hillary family and would never seek to cause them distress.

Our only desire has been to honour Sir Edmund's request to allow the Hillary family access to his documents, alongside all of New Zealand. Peter and Sarah Hillary are now seeking exclusivity in terms of access"

We're uncertain why Peter has sought a legal interpretation in the High Court, however we will honour any outcome the court decides upon."

The museum has had numerous conversations with Peter and Sarah about the bequest, and has at all times provided Peter and Sarah with full access to the family records, and will continue to do so.

"Sir Edmund wanted to ensure his records were accessible to all New Zealanders through the museum in perpetuity, as well as the Hillary family, and Auckland Museum is committed to honouring that request."

ENDS