



# Finding Taonga Tūturu

Any taonga tūturu found after 1 April 1976 is in the first instance Crown owned to allow claims for actual ownership to be lodged. This newsletter outlines the process for finders of taonga tūturu.

## The Definition of Taonga Tūturu

*Taonga tūturu* is defined in section 2 of the Protected Objects Act. It replaces the term *artifact* that was defined in section 2 of the Antiquities Act.

*Taonga tūturu* means an object that—

- relates to Maori culture, history, or society; and
- was, or appears to have been, manufactured or modified in New Zealand by Maori; or brought into New Zealand by Maori; or used by Maori; and
- is more than 50 years old

## Finding of Taonga Tūturu

All finds of taonga tūturu must be reported to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage or the nearest public museum with 28 days of the finding.

The definition of **found** in the Protected Objects Act is as follows—*discovered or obtained in circumstances that do not indicate with reasonable certainty who has ownership of it and the last owner was not alive when it was found.*

Therefore found does not just mean recently excavated or uncovered in archaeological sites. Found can also cover, for example, taonga tūturu you find in your

garden, on the beach or when walking in a National Park.

Newly found taonga tūturu are, in the first instance, the property of the Crown. They must be notified to the Ministry and are then given national identification number (commonly referred to as a “z” number).

Taonga tūturu remain in Crown ownership until a determination on ownership is made by the Maori Land Court. Any person who may have any right, title, estate, or interest in the taonga tūturu may apply to the Court.

## Registered Collectors please note!

Just because you are a registered collector does not mean that you own any taonga tūturu you find and do not need to notify the Ministry. You must follow the process outlined above and notify the find.

## Archaeological sites

Known and suspected archaeological sites are protected by the Historic Places Act 1993 and must not be deliberately disturbed in order to find taonga tūturu. The Act is administered by New Zealand Historic Place Trust, [www.historic.org.nz](http://www.historic.org.nz).

The Protected Objects Act runs in parallel to the Historic Places Act and provides greater protection for archaeological sites and the objects recovered from them.

**COMING SOON** – New electronic forms for notifying newly found taonga tūturu

The Ministry is currently trialling an internet based system that will allow museums and certain organisations to notify the Ministry electronically of any newly found taonga tūturu. Digital photos will also be able to be attached to the form. However, until the trial is finished, please continue using the paper notification forms issued under the Antiquities Act.

## Lists of Taonga Tūturu

The Ministry can provide your organisation with a list of taonga tūturu found in your area/rohe still in Crown ownership. The list is generated using Territorial Local Authority boundaries. Please contact us if you would like more information.

## Next issues

Ownership and custody of taonga tūturu will be covered in the New Year

