

# Human Remains in New Zealand Museums

**Report on the survey of ancestral human remains held by New Zealand museums**

31 October 2018

NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	5
PART ONE – SURVEY.....	7
Stakeholder Consultation .....	7
Survey of Human Remains in museum collections: results and methodology	8
Survey Results - Size and Scope of Human Remains in Collections.....	11
Stakeholder Consultation – Provenance.....	13
Stakeholder Consultation – Nationwide Repatriation Process .....	15
Stakeholder Consultation – Repatriation Experience .....	17
Stakeholder Consultation - Identifying Issues .....	19
PART TWO – HISTORICAL CONTEXT .....	23
Collecting Human Remains.....	23
Repatriation Development in Aotearoa New Zealand 1980s to present.....	25
Appendix I: Map Identifying Locations of Major Human Remains Collections.....	27
Appendix II: Case Studies .....	28

## Executive Summary

### **The pathway to returning or laying to rest ancestral human remains currently held by New Zealand museums**

This project is in response to the changing international and domestic environment in which museums now largely accept that the ethical position is to repatriate human remains in their collections and not to publicly display them, without good reason.

The return of ancestral human remains (remains that originate from existing source communities, usually indigenous) is a growing issue throughout the world. Museums in countries such as Australia, the United States and Canada have been returning remains back to their indigenous communities for well over 20 years.

Internationally New Zealand is regarded as a leader in the repatriation movement with indigenous peoples like the Rapa Nui developing their own repatriation programmes based on Te Papa's Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme. New Zealand has also returned remains to source communities, both within New Zealand and outside it, but on a case-by-case basis rather than as part of an orchestrated programme.

In order to better understand the scope of human remains held in New Zealand museums, and the issues those museums face with regard to repatriation, a survey of 162 museums was conducted by the Ministry during October 2018. The resulting survey data - and the conversations with museums which have already repatriated their remains holdings - suggest future areas of focus for the government and the museum sector.

The survey revealed that over 3,300 sets of remains, of which 83 are Pacific in origin, are held throughout New Zealand. They could be returned in a more coordinated way if both the government and the museum sector played a leadership role in their spheres of influence.

This report summarises the current situation with regard to human remains in New Zealand museums. It describes the size and scope of remains held and identifies the barriers facing museums wanting to return remains. Medical institutions holding human remains lie outside the scope of the current project.

### **Problems with the current situation**

The main barriers to progressing large scale domestic repatriations are museum capacity, capability, and the need for a repatriation policy framework. This is especially so for the small institutions but applies to all museums to some extent, even Te Papa.

The cost of return or burial is also a significant barrier for museums. The larger institutions hold the most remains and therefore the cost of return is exponentially greater for them.

Few museums, aside from Te Papa and the Auckland War Memorial Museum, can resource professional repatriation teams staffed by people with the relevant skill sets and the ability to plan and carry out successful repatriations. For most museums, repatriation of remains is a relatively rare experience and not something they are resourced to do.

A national policy framework that museum policies and practices can link to is sought by the museum sector. International repatriation – the return of kōiwi/kōimi from overseas institutions back to New Zealand – is supported by the government's 2003 repatriation policy. This policy does not apply to remains (Māori/Moriori, Pacific or other) held in New Zealand museums, often as a result of colonial collection practices.

While repatriations within New Zealand (and from New Zealand overseas as with the Rapanui repatriation in 2018) do occur on a case by case basis, there is no government repatriation policy that applies to all circumstances.

### **Desired outcome**

New Zealand's position as a global repatriation leader will be enhanced and we hope stronger relationships between source communities and the museum sector will develop from future discussions on human remains: building new relationships in some cases and strengthening others.

A co-ordinated national approach to repatriation would encourage social healing and reconciliation, in particular for Māori, Moriori and Pacific peoples as most remains were collected during the colonial period.

### **Conclusion**

Few countries in the world have conducted a national survey of this kind (the UK has, Australia has not). The benefit has been to obtain rich and comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data on which to base the Ministry's policy advice regarding the repatriation of human remains.

New Zealand museums are very supportive of a more proactive approach to repatriation and their views, captured through the survey, are set out in this report. The Ministry appreciates the openness of all the museums who participated in the survey or gave advice throughout the process.

The time seems right to consider a nationwide return while acknowledging there are museum capacity and capability issues to address. The Ministry proposes the museum sector take the lead on the actual return process while the Government focuses on ensuring the repatriation of human remains policy settings are fit for purpose.

## Introduction

### Context of this report

The museum sector is calling for a better understanding of remains held in New Zealand museums and the issues surrounding their acquisition and potential repatriation. Current government policy relates only to Māori and Moriori remains held in overseas institutions and does not apply to those held in New Zealand museums.

This has placed New Zealand in a situation where it proactively supports the international return of remains back to Iwi/Imi, Hapū and whānau, but New Zealand museums note that there is no government guidance at the domestic level. By domestic repatriation we mean repatriation of human remains from New Zealand museums back to Māori/Moriiori communities or to international source communities depending on where the remains originated from.

This is reflected in the number of human remains still held in New Zealand museums despite institutions being willing to repatriate. Domestic repatriation does occur but on a much smaller scale compared to human remains returning to New Zealand. For example, Te Papa has repatriated 49 sets of remains since 2003 and the Auckland War Memorial Museum has returned approximately 26 sets since 2008. In contrast, the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme managed by Te Papa Tongarewa has seen the return of over 600 Māori and Moriori human remains from overseas museums since 2003.<sup>1</sup>

Community awareness - of museums holding remains - appears low in many areas and this matters in a situation where repatriation is generally driven by source community requests. Most human remains entered New Zealand collections over 120 years ago, and have remained there because descendant communities are often not aware of their existence, especially in smaller museums. There are some cases where human remains have been retained for scientific and educational purposes, such as Egyptian mummified remains. Most museums surveyed do not have a repatriation or human remains policy and this situation has contributed to a reactive rather than proactive approach.

Over the last 20 years retaining human remains without the consent of descendant communities is seen more widely amongst museums as less than ethical, and this is reflected in the strong desire for museums throughout the world to return human remains to their source communities (refer to Chapters 9 and 10 for more information).

In New Zealand the focus of the last 10 years has been on returning Māori and Moriori human remains from overseas back to New Zealand through Te Papa.

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<sup>1</sup> Not all remains repatriated through the Karanga Aotearoa Programme can be returned to specific Iwi/Imi as the provenance may only be enough to know that an individual originated from New Zealand.

Museum experts are now calling for a focus on supporting New Zealand museums so they can do the same in a domestic context. This is strongly reflected in the responses received through the survey.

### **Why repatriation is important**

The act of returning remains back to descendant communities is part of an ongoing response by museums and governments around the world to right the wrongs of the past. The reconnection of ancestors (past) with descendants (present) and the land reaffirms the strong connection Māori have with their past and with place, and how those connections relate to identity.

Repatriation is one way in which Māori/Moriori are reclaiming their cultural heritage, identity and authority over their past. Repatriation is also important from a moral and ethical standpoint and there are significant social healing benefits for all involved in this process.

### **Treaty of Waitangi partnership**

Manatū Taonga recognises the need for the Crown to meet its Treaty commitments with Iwi on matters of repatriation in a meaningful manner. The Ministry has Treaty settlement protocols and relationship arrangements with more than 50 Iwi, hapū and whānau groups. The repatriation of kōiwi and kōimi to descendant communities is an integral part of honouring the ongoing relationship between the Crown and tangata whenua.

### **Repatriating human remains aligns with government policy and international accords**

International and national policy drivers emphasise the importance of human remains to their descendant communities; the responsibility that government agencies in New Zealand and the museum sector have towards remains in their care; and the rights of indigenous peoples to be involved in the care and protection of their cultural property (including human remains).

## PART ONE - SURVEY

### Stakeholder Consultation

#### Introduction

Stakeholders were asked for information on the following areas:

- Size and scope of human remains in museum's collection
- The use of human remains
- Museum policies/guidelines relating to human remains
- Capability and capacity
- Repatriation experiences
- Community relationships

"Thanks to this survey we have become aware of these items in our collection".

Museum respondent

#### Methodology

With an estimated 471 museums in New Zealand, it was important to identify those institutions who could be excluded (for example online museums, wearable arts museums and automotive museums). After considering their purpose and collecting focus, the Ministry identified a subset of 162 museums to contact which held the range of collection types which might, potentially, include human remains.

A number of different quantitative and qualitative methods were utilised to gather feedback and data from the stakeholders across the sector, to ensure that the information was as detailed as possible.

We talked with museums about our approach to identify museum holdings at the New Zealand Repatriation Research Network in Christchurch in September 2018. Survey questions were tested with those museums involved in the network, including the five major museums across the country. The online survey was then sent out on 2 October 2018 to 162 museums and institutions.

Overall, 107 institutions (66 percent) participated in the consultation process and were very open and engaged in the kaupapa. Some museums do not hold remains and therefore did not participate. We also interviewed two of the four museums which have fully repatriated their remains to get a clear picture of what a successful – and sensitive – process consists of.

## Survey of Human Remains in museum collections: results and methodology

The aim of the museum survey was to:

- Understand the size, scope and geographical distribution of human remains held in New Zealand museums
- Gauge the willingness of museums to work collaboratively on repatriations
- Explore the barriers faced by museums with regard to repatriation

Of the 162 museums surveyed, 107 (66%) responded, with 22 (13.5%) of those declaring that their museums held human remains in its collections. The remaining 84 respondents indicated that to the best of their knowledge their museums did not hold human remains. The remaining 55 who did not reply, could possibly hold a small number of humans yet to be identified.

**66%** of museums approached responded to the survey. All major National, Metropolitan, Regional and Provincial museums replied.

### Survey results (based on the 22 museums holding remains)

- There are at least **3,000** sets of remains held in museums across New Zealand (Figure 1):<sup>2</sup>
  - 2,321 (68.61%) Māori
  - 313 (9.26%) Moriori
  - 83 (2.46%) Pacific
  - 65 (1.92%) from the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia.
  - 600 (17.75%) - over 600 human remains - are unprovenanced.
- **4 museums** have returned all their remains (NZ Police Museum, Tairāwhiti Museum, Kerikeri Mission House, and Tirau Museum). Refer to Chapter 11 for details on how this was achieved.
- **97%** of all remains are held by **seven** museums in Auckland, Whanganui, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin and Southland (see Appendix I).<sup>3</sup>

**10 of the 22 museums** report receiving repatriation requests from Māori/Moriori, the United States (First Nations), and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) communities. Requests have focused on the larger regional museums located in the main centres and

<sup>2</sup> A 'set' can be 1 or more parts of a body and is dependent on how a museum registered them.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents advise that, in general, human remains are respectfully stored and not used for any purpose, display or otherwise.



appear dependent on community awareness of whether remains are held. No museum approaches from Pacific individuals or groups *within New Zealand* have been made that we are aware of.

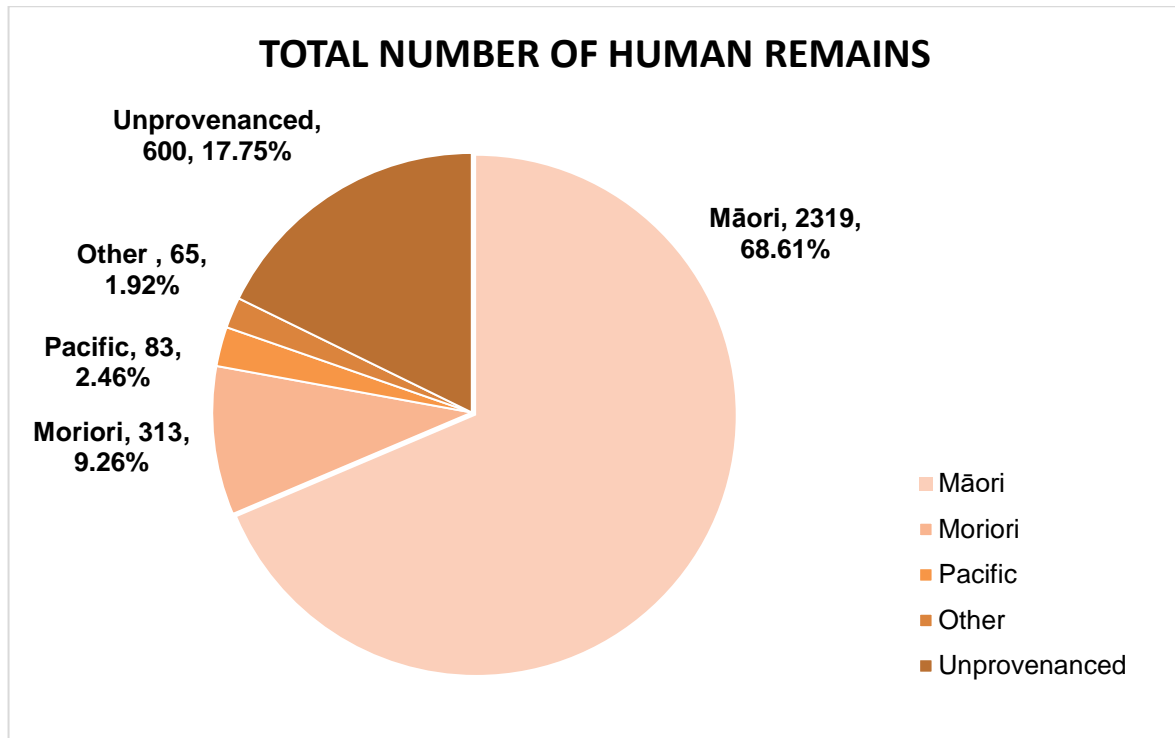


Figure 1: Total Number of Human Remains held in New Zealand Museums

Feedback regarding the repatriation of modified human remains, including Egyptian mummies, and burial taonga/objects is mixed. There is a desire amongst museums for further discussion on this topic. Some museums take the view *all* remains should be returned (or buried locally) and others consider Egyptian mummified remains to be the exception to return. Regardless, ‘mummies’ make up a very small percentage of the overall total – there are 6 known mummies held in New Zealand museums.

### **The museum sector is calling for a national co-ordinated approach**

The museums agree that there needs to be a national coordinated approach to repatriation.

Respondents seek:

- Policy, guidelines or a national framework to assist the sector in the repatriation process.
- A more facilitated/coordinated approach to provenance research to significantly reduce the number of unprovenanced human remains across the museums.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Provenance refers to place of origin.

- Further discussion on the status of modified human remains, burial taonga and final resting places.<sup>5</sup>

Respondents suggest some ways to address the issues:

- Develop a museum sector charter and/or guidelines and tools to assist repatriation policy and practice (this could be led by National Services Te Paerangi and Museums Aotearoa)
- More researchers to undertake provenance research: a lack of experienced researchers - and research time - was seen as the most significant barrier followed by lack of knowledge on how to develop a robust and culturally sensitive repatriation process
- Look at more effective and efficient ways to repatriate. One possible model is an 'Iwi by Iwi' or regional approach with Māori/Moriori/Pacific community readiness being critical to success for this model. There are challenges to this and other approaches and Māori/Moriori/Pacific communities will undoubtedly have their own views on how best to proceed when consulted.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Modified human remains are objects which have been modified entirely or partly from human bone (e.g. carved, or decorated).

<sup>6</sup> There are current cases where Iwi are not ready to receive ancestral remains or that there are multiple interests in ancestral remains from a particular area. This may also be the case in the Pacific and elsewhere internationally. These issues may result in returns to descendant communities taking some time to complete.

## Survey Results - Size and Scope of Human Remains in Collections

### KEY FINDINGS

- There are over 3,000 sets of human remains held by 22 New Zealand museums
- 7 museums hold 97% of human remains (2,910 sets)
- The vast majority of human remains are identified as being Māori and Moriori, with a significant number of wider Pacific origin.
- There are a large number of human remains identified as unprovenanced (between 600 to 900 sets).

The survey results have provided an estimate of over 3,000 sets of remains held in New Zealand museums throughout the country. Within the 107 museums contacted, 22 museums indicated that they held remains in their collections. As seen in Figure 2, the majority (approx. 2,632) of the human remains originate from New Zealand.

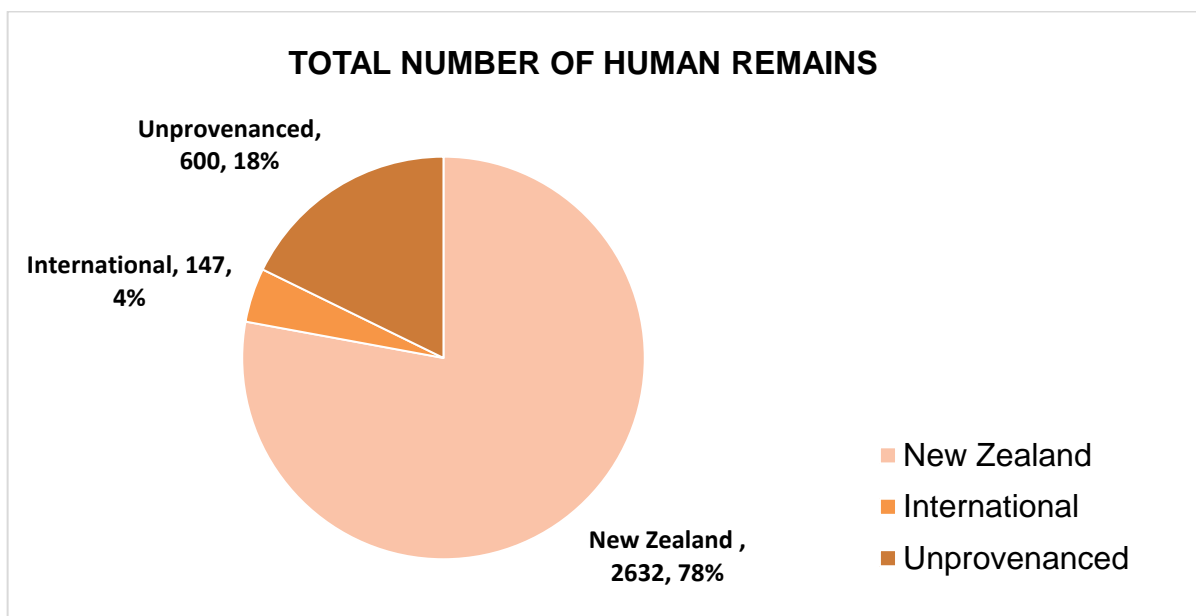


Figure 2: Total estimated number of human remains held in New Zealand Museums.

### Uses of Human Remains in New Zealand Museums

The majority of remains are not on display or used for research purposes. However, some of the exceptions include Egyptian Mummies and specific parts of the human body such as the spine, gallbladder, and skull retained for educational/medical purposes, or as evidence.

## Human Remains from New Zealand

Of those provenanced to New Zealand approximately 313 are from the Chatham Islands. Auckland, Waikato (which includes Hauraki/Thames), Canterbury, Otago and Southland regions also have a high number of remains (over 200 each).

It is important to note that a significant percentage of unprovenanced remains have been identified through this survey, with between 600 to 900 currently having little or no provenance.<sup>7</sup>

Over **600** human remains in museums have little to no provenance – more research on them should be undertaken.

Further research could reduce this figure significantly, but there will still be a number of remains that cannot be sufficiently identified to be returned.

## International Human Remains

There are approximately 147 sets of human remains with provenance outside of New Zealand. Initial information shows that all major continents are represented, and there is a high percentage of human remains from the Pacific.

There are approximately 55 sets of remains provenanced to Melanesia, 25 to Polynesia, and 10 to Australia/Tasmania making 70% of international remains being provenanced to the wider Pacific.

**70%** of the international human remains held by museums are from the wider Pacific: Melanesia (55), Polynesia (25), and Australia/Tasmania (10).

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<sup>7</sup> An estimated range of 600-900 has been identified as museums have noted that while they many have large numbers of unprovenanced remains these numbers likely consist of several remains belonging to the same individual and therefore these numbers can indicate number of individual bones rather than individuals.

## Stakeholder Consultation – Provenance

### KEY FINDINGS

- Most descendant communities need full provenance to ensure they are receiving their own ancestral human remains
- Dedicated research focus is needed
- Confirmation of provenance is required

“554 items are currently listed on the museum's database that have no provenance information”.

Museum respondent

52% of museums have issues regarding the provenance of human remains in their collections (Figure 3). There are around 600 human remains which have been identified as being unprovenanced. This is the most significant issue for the museums as it impacts on whether they can be returned.

The main issues relate to a lack of information in museum records. Uncertainty as to when remains came into museums for example as most entered collections in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when record keeping was less rigorous. Dedicated archival research is required for unprovenanced remains.

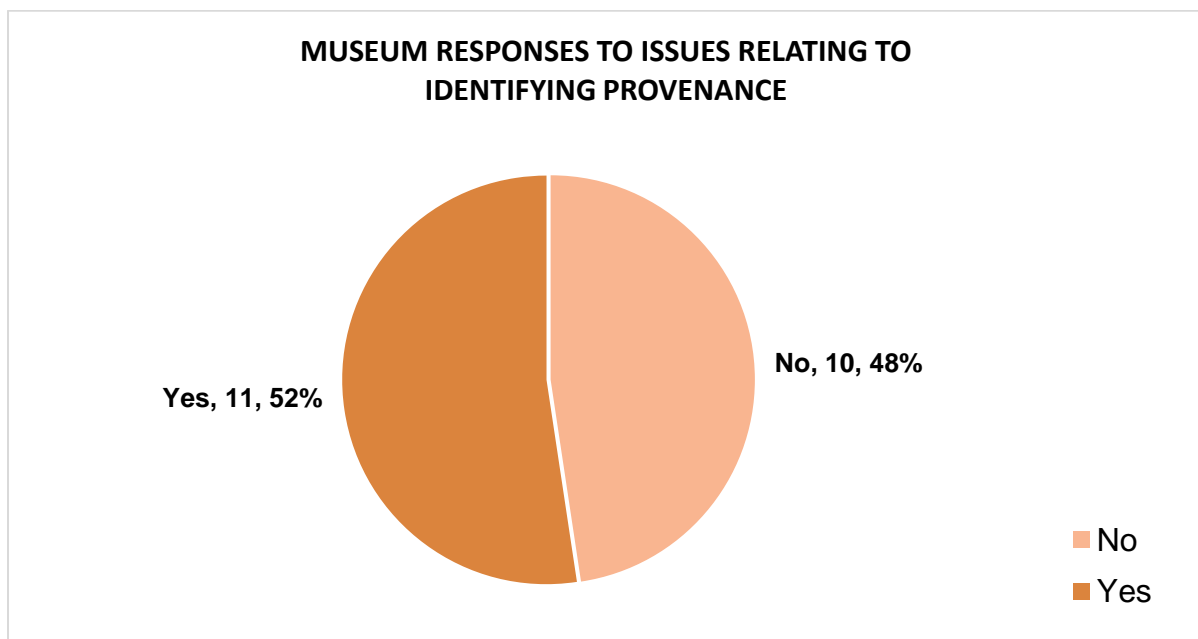


Figure 3: Museum responses to provenance issues with human remains in their collections.

The respondents consider Iwi and community consultation to be critical to determining what happens to unprovenanced human remains. A variety of views were heard, with regard to retaining, returning or burying human remains which were unprovenanced. Five museums responded that remains were to be kept in their museum until such time as provenance can be determined. One held no view but was currently in consultation with Iwi. One museum said to bury – this view is driven by Iwi tikanga. Two museums suggested the idea of a national resting place.

“Research [into] unprovenanced human remains is underway and investigations into a permanent repository will begin after. All options will be presented to our boards [museum and Iwi] for consideration”.

Museum respondent

Discussions with the major museums over the past few months have identified some of the issues relating to the provenance of many of the ancestral remains held by museums. The need and relevance of intrusive research such as DNA and isotope research was a point of discussion at the New Zealand Repatriation Research Network meeting in September, as was the cost associated with invasive and non-invasive research in order to potentially identify provenance. The lack of time available due to staff already being stretched to capacity and resourcing being focused on existing work programmes and activities was also a discussion point.

## Stakeholder Consultation – Nationwide Repatriation Process

### KEY FINDINGS

- 52% of museums who responded do not have a specific policy dealing with human remains or repatriation
- 85% of museums indicated they were willing to collaborate on repatriating human remains
- 100% of respondents see the value in supporting a nation-wide repatriation process

“A guiding charter would be very helpful - or even a clear step-by-step guide with relevant things to consider at each step in the repatriation process would be a great start. We have felt like we are inventing the wheel during our repatriation journey and it has been a bit hard and scary. There are so many different scenarios that need considering”.

Museum Respondent

Of the 21 responses received regarding human remains policy, 11 museums say they have a policy relating specifically to human remains. Museums located in the South Island note they are guided by the Ngāi Tahu Kōiwi Tangata Policy and follow Ngāi Tahu tikanga.

Museums were overwhelmingly positive and open to participating in the repatriation of human remains. 85% of museums who hold human remains are willing to collaborate on repatriating, and only three museums are disinclined to do so (Figure 4). They may wish to participate if a process is established that they support.

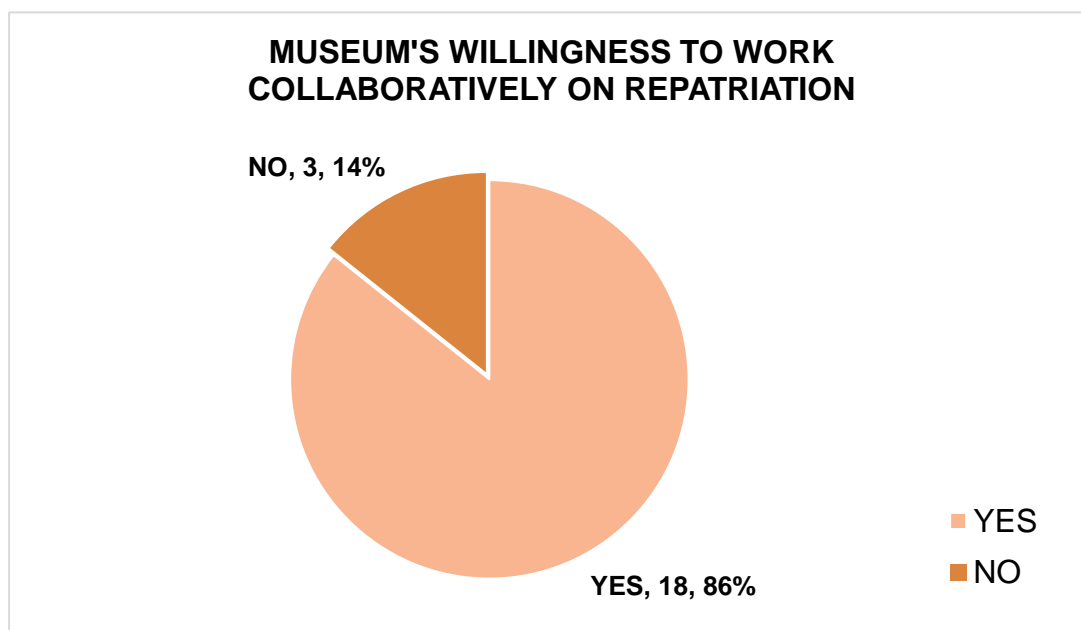


Figure 4: Museum's willingness to work collaboratively in repatriating human remains.

## **Development of a Nationwide Process for Repatriation**

The majority of museums who hold human remains see value in supporting a nationwide process for repatriation. There is a strong call for the development of a national policy or charter and process guidelines which museums could follow.

There is strong support (79% of those who hold human remains) from museums in working with the sector to develop a national framework on repatriation and becoming part of a museum repatriation network. An informal network (New Zealand Repatriation Research Network) was set up following the Museums Aotearoa conference in May 2018, and two meetings have taken place so far, with all the major New Zealand museums (who are also holders of the majority of human remains) taking part and have begun to proactively work together to in a more coordinated approach.



## Stakeholder Consultation - Repatriation Experience

### KEY FINDINGS

- 12 (46%) of the 22 museums who currently hold human remains have been involved in repatriation in the past.
- Only six (25%) of the museums that hold human remains are currently involved in repatriation.
- Only seven (35%) of the museums that hold human remains have had requests from communities for repatriation.

“Our focus is now on proactive repatriation of burial objects, for example waka tūpāpaku, and we would welcome wider support in this area as the repatriation process can be challenging”.

Museum Respondent

26 museums indicated that they hold or previously held human remains,

- Four museums have repatriated all of the human remains within their collections (see Appendix II for case studies).
- 22 currently hold human remains.

Interestingly, only six museums who hold human remains are currently involved in repatriation (Figure 4).<sup>8</sup> This includes negotiations with Iwi and other indigenous communities internationally on arrangements for return.

Repatriation requests from Iwi and other communities, including the Pacific nations, has not been significant across the museum sector, with only **six** museums (being larger institutions) indicating that they have been approached. One of the reasons for this may be due to Iwi not considering that small local museums hold human remains.

Many Iwi in Treaty settlements – once they are in full post settlement operational mode – intend to approach institutions they believe hold their taonga (in New Zealand and overseas). Museums are therefore likely to come under more pressure in the next few years to provide information on what they hold whether human remains and/or taonga. It takes on average five years for most Iwi to turn to cultural priorities post-settlement as the focus is on social and economic development during the establishment phase.

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<sup>8</sup> Over the past 20 years 12 museums have been involved in repatriation.

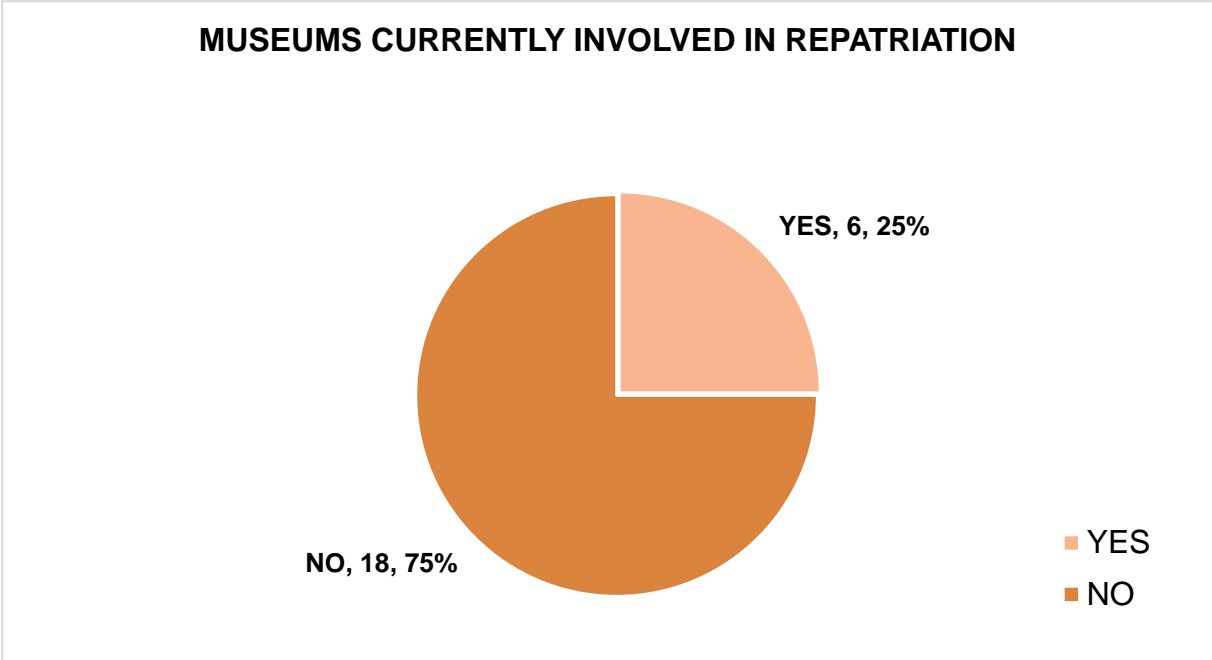


Figure 5: Museums currently involved in repatriation

## Stakeholder Consultation - Identifying Issues

### KEY FINDINGS

- There is currently no consistent policy in place.
- There is a lack of expert staff available.
- There is insufficient funding to undertake this work.

“There has to be a national policy, procedure & cultural protocols to address so that there is a uniform process for the care and repatriation of ancestral remains”.

Museum Respondent

Aside from the provenance issues previously identified, responses from the survey reflected the lack of skilled and dedicated staff needed to undertake provenance research.

Many museums also highlighted the lack of resources (including time) required to undertake this work. It is clear from these responses that the issues identified relate to skill set, capacity, logistical resourcing (e.g. travel, burial plots/urupā etc.) and time to work on repatriations.

Responses confirmed that for the most part there was no allocated budget for repatriation, it appears that this is drawn generally from museums’ operating budget. Only two museums (Auckland and Te Papa) have a dedicated budget for repatriation. This acts as a barrier for the majority of museums who need to either draw funds away from projects or usual activities, or source third party funds. In the case of one institution which actively repatriates, they have received strong community support from local undertakers and cemeteries.

“This Museum feels it's important for Iwi to have agency in making their own decisions regarding what happens to kōiwi - however, if agreement can't be reached amongst Iwi themselves, or between Iwi and the Museum, then a national process to use would be helpful”.

Museum Respondent

Many museums commented that returning ancestors home can be a long slow process as communities may have different priorities. This is an important issue to consider as time constraints and forcing repatriations on communities is not the best approach. Flexibility and open communication are essential. With 92% of museums considering they have positive relationships with tangata whenua, the views expressed by museums on the issue of repatriation can be expected to be

widespread. This may also be the case with regard to international human remains, particularly with the way in which communities view and treat those who have passed. It is important not to assume that all indigenous peoples have the same relationship with the remains of their ancestors.

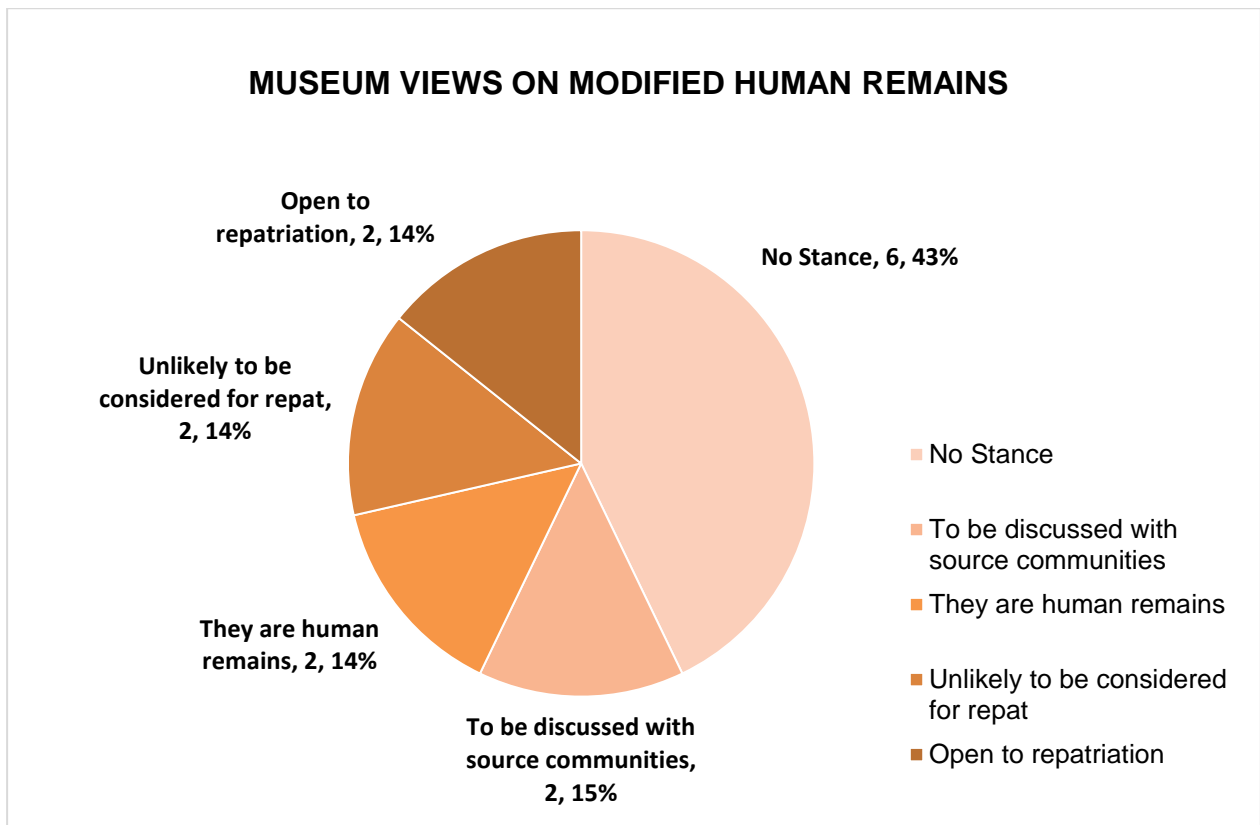
Museums involved in domestic reburials achieve a lot on very little budget and are dependent on community goodwill. To be successful, museums must be committed to the repatriation kaupapa, have the support of senior management, their Governance body, and Iwi advisers. They also need to be in a financial position where they are able to redirect funding to this work without unduly compromising their operational viability and income targets.

“Repatriations can be slow and timings can be affected by external events. Repatriations occur by negotiation with source communities (rather than at the Museum’s sole discretion). Communities are not always in a position to receive human remains, may not have a uniform view as to the return, and require time before practical decision-making”.

Museum Respondent

### **Modified Human Remains, Egyptian Mummies and Burial Taonga**

Museums noted that distinguishing between human remains and modified human remains can be difficult. Survey results showed that of the 14 responses, there is no consensus on where modified human remains fit in museum collections. Responses varied with 40% of respondents having no stance as it is seen as a difficult question to answer or that it requires specialist advice (Figure 6). Some museums view modified human remains as human remains not collection items and therefore would consider repatriation.



**Figure 6: Museum views on Modified Human Remains**

Egyptian mummies are viewed generally by international institutions as modified human remains. However, the 17 survey responses received appears to show a different view. Seven museums believed that they should be repatriated, while five museums had no view on the matter. Three museums noted that Egyptian mummies should be retained by museums with the agreement of the authorities. One museum noted *“we should be cognisant of the values and practices of source communities, and an understanding that in Egyptian culture such remains are held and displayed by museums throughout the country”*

Burial taonga also had a mixed response from the survey responses. Particularly by the fact museums believe that further guidance and discussion. Some museums did note that repatriation of burial taonga would be considered on a case by case basis.

What the responses do reveal is that this is an area of continuing debate by the sector.

*“Many ceremonial objects involving human remains were brought to New Zealand or elsewhere to continue their cultural practices in their new country. Under these circumstances it is acceptable not to repatriate these objects”.*

Museum Respondent

It is important for this report to clearly set out the issues identified by museums in the context of repatriation in New Zealand. Though there is willingness on the part of museums, there are barriers and circumstance which prevent successful repatriations from taking place. This includes issues relating to a community's ability and willingness to receive ancestral remains.

## PART TWO – HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Collecting Human Remains

The European practice of collection and theft of human remains from New Zealand began with Captain Cook's first voyage in 1769. This was at a time when European scientists were beginning to venture into the South Pacific to explore a people described as 'primitive' and 'savage'<sup>9</sup>. During Cook's first voyage members of the ship's crew obtained a number of human remains, including the preserved head of a young boy<sup>10</sup>, arm bones<sup>11</sup>, a human scalp<sup>12</sup> and possibly the mummified body of a child<sup>13</sup>.

With the arrival of sealers and whalers in the early 1800s, Toi moko<sup>14</sup> (preserved Māori heads) were beginning to appear as an item of trade. In 1807 two Toi moko were recorded as having been sent to botanist Joseph Banks by the Governor and former Governor of New South Wales<sup>15</sup>. From the early 1800s until about the 1820s the trade in Toi moko was at its peak, particularly in the Bay of Islands and the Thames area. The trade did however continue until at least the late 1830s in area such as Kāpiti, and was also known to have occurred in Otago, Murihiku, and Te Tairāwhiti.

As this trade was mainly undertaken by Māori, it should be made clear that Māori did not trade their own, in that they were trading their enemy rather than their own Iwi/Hapū members. Intertribal warfare was rife during this time and the European musket was an extremely sought-after item of trade for Māori. The period known as the Musket Wars was the height of the trade, however this was soon short lived as a Government Order was issued by Governor Darling of New South Wales that sought to ban the import of Toi moko into Sydney<sup>16</sup>. Despite the proclamation, the trade continued and Toi moko were obtained by both English and American ships at least up until the 1840s<sup>17</sup>.

The collection of skeletal remains for scientific purposes began in the 1850s with large numbers being taken from burial places from the 1870s, particularly by New Zealand museum staff, such as Thomas Cheeseman at the Auckland Museum, due to the exceedingly high demand for overseas museum exchange<sup>18</sup>. The network of museum staff, collectors, naturalists and scientists in New Zealand was small which meant that exchanges amongst them was frequent. Museum directors and staff in New Zealand developed exchange networks throughout the world in order to create

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<sup>9</sup> Darwin 1963: 363; Dieffenbach 1843: 155.

<sup>10</sup> Hawkesworth 2004: 393-394.

<sup>11</sup> Edwards 1999: 102-103.

<sup>12</sup> Aranui 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Beaglehole 1968: 584.

<sup>14</sup> More commonly known as Mokomokai or Mokamokai.

<sup>15</sup> Aranui 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Fforde *et al* 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Wilkes 1842.

<sup>18</sup> Cheeseman 1878b: 1; Quatrefages 1876: 1; Cheeseman 1885.

their own significant museum collections. Men were even enlisted to locate and collect Māori and Moriori remains from burial caves, and other known burial locations throughout New Zealand and the Chatham Islands. Large numbers of tūpuna and karāpuna<sup>19</sup> were taken without consent from their resting places and exchanged and sold overseas<sup>20</sup>.

Māori and Moriori human remains continue to enter museum collections even to the present day through archaeological excavation, environmental circumstances such as erosion and earthquakes, and through anonymous deposits. There are cases where Iwi require museums to care for their remains until such time as they can be reburied given the complex arrangements required. Some Iwi wish for all their remains to be returned at the same time given it is a hugely resource intensive process.

Human remains from outside of New Zealand also became part of New Zealand museum collections through museum exchanges, purchases from private collectors or were presented by members of the public, from at least the 1870s to the 1970s<sup>21</sup>. It should also be mentioned that some human remains have been collected as trophies of war throughout the Pacific following the Second World War.

In the past an intrinsic value was placed on human remains, and in particular indigenous human remains, following the development of Darwinian theories of evolution from the 1870s, with exchanges, sales and purchases of human remains increasing significantly from this time. An example of the value placed on Māori human remains is the sale of 35 Toi moko and other Māori objects by Major General Horatio G. Robley to former President of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) Morris K. Jessup for £1,500. Jessup then gifted the collection to the AMNH in 1907 where it was valued at \$6,000 USD<sup>22</sup>. This perceived value in human remains continued even up until the 1980s and 90s with Toi moko appearing in auction house catalogues, particularly in England. A Toi moko was sold at auction to the Dover Museum in 1948 for £3,800. Another Toi moko was put up for sale in 1988 with an estimated value of between £6,000 and £10,000<sup>23</sup> (see Chapter 10).

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<sup>19</sup> Both tūpuna and karāpuna refer to ancestors, the latter being the Moriori term for ancestor.

<sup>20</sup> Carruth 1878:1;

<sup>21</sup> Information obtained from Te Papa records.

<sup>22</sup> American Museum of Natural History Press Release 2014.

<https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media-release-repatriation-history-of-the-robley-collection-2014.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Barrett 2005: 3, 8.



## Repatriation Development in Aotearoa New Zealand 1980s to present

### 1980s

The repatriation movement in New Zealand began in the 1980s, however requests for the return of Māori remains began in the 1940s following the publication of diary excerpts from Austrian collector and taxidermist Andreas Reischek. Reischek initially came to New Zealand for two years in 1879 to assist Julius von Haast in the setup of the Canterbury Museum<sup>24</sup>. Eventually he remained here 12 years, also assisting the Auckland Museum, and spending much of this time in the North Island where he removed at least 70 Māori remains from burials and burial caves in areas such as Kāwhia, Taupō, Hokianga and Whāngārei<sup>25</sup>. Knowledge of Reischek's thefts were not widely known in New Zealand until 1926, when a translated excerpt of the book was published in the Evening Post<sup>26</sup>. An English translation of the book was published in 1930 and was widely read by both Māori and Pākehā in New Zealand, and 15 years later their feelings about his exploits were made known<sup>27</sup>.

While stationed in Trieste, Italy, the 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Arapeta Awatere planned to retrieve the Māori remains stolen by Reischek, which were housed at the Imperial Natural History Museum in Vienna. Unfortunately, Awatere was talked out of the undertaking by his seniors<sup>28</sup>. Following the planned attempt, petitions were presented to the New Zealand parliament in 1945 and 1946 seeking the return of the ancestors taken by Reischek. Both petitions noted the “[g]houlish act was a serious betrayal of trust by the naturalist Reischek which caused deep grievance to the late Māori King, Chiefs and the Māori people”<sup>29</sup>. Over the next 20 years attempts were made by Māori, museum and government officials to have the remains returned. It was not until the involvement of the late Māori Queen Dame Te Atairangikaahu, that the remains of Tūpāhau (taken from Kāwhia) were returned in 1985<sup>30</sup>.

In 1988, Ngāpuhi leader and President of New Zealand Māori Council, Sir Graham Latimer was made the legal guardian of Tūpuna Māori, a Toi moko<sup>31</sup> which was up for sale at Bonhams Auction House in London<sup>32</sup>. Following a court injunction preventing the sale and assigning Latimer as guardian, he negotiated for the return of Tūpuna Māori back to New Zealand. Following over six weeks of negotiations he was finally returned home and buried on the Karikari Peninsula in Northland<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Reischek 1930.

<sup>25</sup> King 1981.

<sup>26</sup> Evening Post 1926: 12.

<sup>27</sup> King 1981.

<sup>28</sup> King 1981: 161.

<sup>29</sup> Otene, 1945; Te Huia, 1946.

<sup>30</sup> O'Hara 2011: 10.

<sup>31</sup> Preserved Māori head, mainly tattooed.

<sup>32</sup> Harrison 2002; High Court New Zealand 1988.

<sup>33</sup> Harrison 2002.

That same year members of Ngāti Hau, a hapū of Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī of the Whanganui River travelled to Tasmania to retrieve the remains of their rangatira Hohepa Te Umuroa who was buried on Maria Island in 1847<sup>34</sup>. Te Umuroa was a political prisoner and was sent to Hobart following his involvement in the attack at Boulcott's Farm in 1846.<sup>35</sup>

## **1990s**

It was not until the 1990s that a more organised effort to repatriate Māori remains was made through the work of Māui Pomare. Pomare, was Chair of the National Museum Council and well as a member of the New Zealand Māori Council. He undertook a number of repatriations from the United Kingdom in the early 1990s and developed the first human remains policy at the National Museum (now Te Papa)<sup>36</sup>.

## **2000s**

Then in 2003, a government policy was developed and Te Papa was mandated to work on behalf of Māori and Moriori to return remains from overseas institutions. The programme is run by the principles that, the government's role is one of facilitation; repatriation is by mutual agreement only; no payment for kōiwi tangata will be made; and kōiwi tangata must be identified as originating from New Zealand. Since its establishment the programme has repatriated over 600 ancestral remains.

Initial research has been undertaken to identify the wider international repatriation policy to compare this with the New Zealand context. A summary of this research can be seen in Appendix IV.

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<sup>34</sup> Sinclair 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Wilkie 2012: 1.

<sup>36</sup> Pomare 1993: 1.

# Appendix I: Map Identifying Locations of Major Human Remains Collections



## Appendix II: Repatriation Case Studies

The museum survey identified a total of five museums who have successfully repatriated all the human remains held in their institution. The Hawke's Bay Museum (now the MTG) in Napier, proactively repatriated all kōiwi tangata held in their collections in the 1980s. This was done in a private and low-key manner guided by local kaumātua. Similarly, the Kerikeri Mission Station, who held the remains of one individual (accessioned into the collection in the 1970s), was proactive in returning the tupuna back to Ngāti Kuri in 2011.

The Tirau Museum had a slightly different experience, in 2017 a tourist presented the museum with a human long bone which had been taken from a cave in Waitomo. The museum owner immediately made contact with his local Iwi who contacted the appropriate community members in Waitomo. The bone was returned to the Iwi in 2018. These three museums show how important it is to maintain relationships with local Iwi/Hapū, as this enables a much smoother return of ancestral remains back to their communities of origin. It also emphasises the importance of museum managers in instigating the return process and their ethical motivations.

Following are two case studies - Tairāwhiti Museum and the New Zealand Police Museum - conducted as part of the survey. These interviews highlight the processes, principles, successes and challenges of returning ancestral human remains.

### **Interview with Tairāwhiti Museum past and present staff, October 2018**

In 2007, Tairāwhiti Museum, through the work of its Curator Taonga Māori, undertook to bury all 15 sets of Māori ancestral remains (kōiwi tangata) held in its collection. This was possible because a Kōiwi Tangata Policy and a Repatriation Policy were developed in 2000, during a time when the museum was undergoing a major governance restructure. These changes included six permanent Iwi seats on the board, and a Māori board chair (the late Dr Apirana Mahuika).

The Kōiwi Tangata Policy was developed to facilitate the return of the small number of kōiwi tangata in the museum's collection. The policy covered kōiwi of all ethnic origins; noted the museum would not collect kōiwi tangata; those held in the museum were not considered part of the collection; and a wāhi tapu would be maintained. It also covered access to the kōiwi tangata and associated information - kōiwi tangata were not to be on public display.

The catalyst was the return of a mere pounamu to Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti in 1999. With a strong Māori presence on the museum's governance board, the museum under the director developed a clear understanding of Māori cultural values, particularly with regards to repatriation. These values and the Board's support made the return of Māori ancestral remains relatively uncomplicated as the Kōiwi Tangata Policy was designed to facilitate the return the kōiwi in the museum's care. The return was led from a tikanga Māori perspective under the guidance of kaumātua and the remains were buried in a quiet and respectful manner.

Key learnings include: the importance of a strong Māori presence in the museum, this is something that has continued into the present. The flexibility and broad scope of both the Kōiwi Tangata and Repatriation policies enable Hapū and Iwi to guide the decision-making process. Maintaining Iwi relationships is now a priority.

Current staff understand that repatriation cannot be forced on people and relationships need to be built on a foundation of trust. It is important for all staff in the museum to be aware of what the museum holds and that communication is open and transparent. Placing time restrictions on decisions, and the return process itself, is not always the best way to work: flexibility is critical to success.

### **Interview with the Director of the New Zealand Police Museum, Wellington, October 2018**

Over a two-year period ending in 2017, the New Zealand Police Museum (NZPM) returned all human remains (38 sets) in its collection.

The NZPM Director looked for New Zealand repatriation legislation or government policy of some kind to guide the return. Te Papa's Karanga Aotearoa repatriation policy – the only policy guide available – did not fit the need for a non-remains domestic repatriation.

A combination of police protocol in dealing with bereaved whānau/families, tikanga Māori (guided by kaumātua and Māori cultural support staff), a feel for what was 'the right thing to do', and the 2015 guidelines for German museums sufficed to develop a sensitive and effective repatriation process.

The principle of informed consent was core to the process. Returning dignity to the deceased drove the project. The relatives were always the first to know and the process was as low key as possible. The NZPM accepted all costs associated with reburial (flights, caskets, DNA tests etc.). Local funeral directors and local councils were very supportive. Some remains couldn't be returned so they were cremated and placed in a public cemetery. The whānau/families (identifying the next of kin was part of the research process) were given the right to decide what needed to be done from the outset. As this varied from whānau/family to whānau/family the process had to be flexible and open.

In the Director's view, a museum consensus on human remains repatriation is essential and should be reflected in Museum Aotearoa's Code of Ethics to guide museums working in this space. Expert knowledge exchange and a repatriation process toolbox (available through Te Papa National Services Te Paerangi) would also be useful. While the preference should always be to return someone to their tūrangawaewae if that's not possible then a national resting place is a good idea.

Internationally, the NZPM are the only police to have reburied all remains.