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# THE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE PAPA TONGAREWA

## KŌIWI TANGATA POLICY

### Summary Information

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#### POLICY STATEMENT

This policy states the position of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (hereinafter referred to as Te Papa) as kaitiaki or guardian in regard to the management and repatriation of kōiwi tangata Māori and Moriori<sup>1</sup>.

Te Papa regards the kōiwi tangata in its guardianship as tūpuna to be cared for in a consistent and culturally appropriate manner until such time as matters relating to their long-term care are resolved with iwi.

When seeking the return of tūpuna to New Zealand from overseas organisations, Te Papa will only repatriate kōiwi tangata with a clear New Zealand provenance. Te Papa does not purchase kōiwi tangata.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Collection Development Policy.

#### POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines that ensure the kōiwi tangata Māori and Moriori in the guardianship of Te Papa will be managed and cared for in a consistent and culturally appropriate manner. Much of the content of the policy describes current practice at Te Papa in this area.

#### PROCEDURES

##### 1. GENERAL

This policy applies to the kōiwi tangata and waka tūpāpaku in the guardianship of Te Papa. Other human remains are not subject to the provisions of this policy.

As a bicultural organisation, Te Papa is committed to working in partnership with iwi in the care and management of their tūpuna.

Waka Tūpāpaku<sup>2</sup> are managed and housed with the kōiwi tangata, but are still classified as part of Te Papa's collection.

Kaimanaaki Kōiwi<sup>3</sup> are appointed by the Kaihautū to undertake the physical care and management of the kōiwi tangata.

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<sup>1</sup> Any part of the human body (skeletal or soft tissue) of Māori or Moriori origin, which is in an unmodified state since death. This includes all Toi Moko (tattooed, preserved heads of Māori or Moriori origin). Items that have been modified entirely or partly from human bone (e.g. carved or decorated) are defined as taonga. These taonga are kept separate from the kōiwi tangata and are identified as part of the Museum's collection and are managed under Te Papa's Collection Development and Management Policies.

<sup>2</sup> Traditional Māori or Moriori vessels used for the burial of kōiwi tangata.

<sup>3</sup> The person/s responsible for the day-to-day care and management of the kōiwi tangata material and associated funerary objects.

Kōiwi tangata of Māori origin have been placed in Te Papa's care from a number of sources including private collectors and individuals, the New Zealand Police, New Zealand universities, medical institutions and overseas museums.

## **2. REGISTRATION & DOCUMENTATION**

For identification purposes all kōiwi tangata housed at Te Papa are given a registration number and are regarded as tūpuna. Photographic records of the material may either already be on file or may be required for identification purposes. Only staff authorised by the Kaihautū will be permitted to take visual recordings of the kōiwi tangata material.

Permission to record, use or make available visual recordings of the material must be obtained from the Kaihautū and provenanced kōiwi tangata must first obtain permission from the relevant iwi or hapū authority.

## **3. WĀHI TAPU**

Te Papa maintains two wāhi tapu (consecrated repositories) for the storage, care and protection of kōiwi tangata and waka tūpāpaku. The wāhi tapu is afforded the same degree of respect as any urupa/grave or burial site.

Access to the wāhi tapu is restricted to authorised staff only, with the Kaihautū having discretionary authority to allow access to unauthorised staff or iwi members mandated by an appropriate iwi or hapū authority.

## **4. KAITIAKITANGA**

Kōiwi tangata are stored and treated with dignity and in a manner sympathetic with cultural requirements.

To ensure cultural requirements are met the Kaihautū may seek advice from the iwi kaumātua in residence, Te Rōpu Whakamana Māori, and other external sources of advice as may be sought from time to time.

When authorised persons are working in the wāhi tapu or with kōiwi tangata material a Kaimanaaki Kōiwi will be present for part or all of the duration to ensure appropriate protocols are conducted (e.g. karakia/prayers). When kōiwi tangata material is removed from the wāhi tapu for any reason, a Kaimanaaki Kōiwi will accompany the material at all times.

Kāimanaaki Kōiwi will undertake, from time to time, specific conservation required for the ongoing care and management of kōiwi tangata.

## **5. ACCESS**

Access to kōiwi tangata material is restricted to staff and external people authorised by the Kaihautū.

Under certain circumstances the Kaihautū may allow access to provenanced kōiwi tangata by iwi or other non-staff members for specific reasons. Permission will first be obtained from the relevant iwi or hapū authority. This may include viewing for reasons of cultural and/or spiritual significance.

Under certain circumstances the Kaihautū may allow access to unprovenanced kōiwi tangata for specific reasons. The Kaihautū may seek advice from the iwi kaumātua in residence at Te Papa, Te Rōpu Whakamana Māori and other external sources as may be required.

All authorised visitors will be supervised and escorted through the wāhi tapu by Te Papa Kaimanaaki Kōiwi. Only Kaimanaaki Kōiwi and external people expressly authorised by the Kaihautū are permitted to handle kōiwi tangata.

Access to the wāhi tapu will be treated in accordance with appropriate cultural requirements. Further information on specific cultural requirements can be obtained from Te Rōpu Whakamana Māori.

At no time will media be permitted access to the wāhi tapu.

At no time will any kōiwi tangata or waka tūpāpaku be used by Te Papa for the purpose of museum display.

If members of the public inquire about access to the wāhi tapu, further detail and advice can be obtained from Te Rōpu Whakamana Māori.

## **6. MĀTAURANGA MĀORI**

Mātauranga Māori is that bank of information built up by generations of tūpuna Māori<sup>4</sup>, and encapsulates the holistic knowledge that describes the relationships and linkages that tie phenomena. This is based on whakapapa – the union of specific elements to achieve a particular outcome, quality or utility.

As kaitiaki, Te Papa has a responsibility to nurture the mātauranga that exists or that may be developed as a result of the kōiwi tangata in its care.

Similar provisions for seeking access to mātauranga Māori information or material associated with the kōiwi tangata will apply to other requests for access to kōiwi tangata material and information (as noted previously).

## **7. HOKINGA / REPATRIATION**

Te Papa's position in repatriating kōiwi tangata, is that they are not considered part of the museum's collection, rather they are the remains of ancestors to be treated appropriately at all times.

All proposed inward repatriation projects are subject to the approval of the Kaihautū and Chief Executive.

### **7.1 International inward repatriation of Kōiwi Tangata**

Te Papa will only repatriate kōiwi tangata with a clear New Zealand provenance.

Te Papa will respond constructively when approached by overseas organisations wishing to repatriate remains back to New Zealand, or by iwi requiring Te Papa to make an approach to overseas organisations on their behalf. Te Papa's position will be explained and partnership relationships established.

When engaging with other organisations or institutions Te Papa will seek repatriation.

A Te Papa courier well versed in tikanga Māori and able to carry out the repatriation process will accompany any kōiwi tangata being repatriated to Te Papa. In some cases, the Kaihautū may also invite iwi kaumatua to be involved in this process.

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<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this policy *tūpuna* is used to refer to the ancestors of iwi Māori and Moriori.

A formal tikanga process will be engaged in the disposal of any packaging material that is no longer required within the wāhi tapu (i.e. boxing and packaging used in the repatriation process).

## **7.2 Domestic repatriation of Kōiwi Tangata**

All proposed domestic repatriation projects are subject to the approval of the Kaihautū and Chief Executive.

Only kōiwi tangata with a clear iwi or hapū provenance will be domestically repatriated to their rohe of origin.

When a domestic repatriation is proposed Te Papa will seek to engage with the recognised mandated body of the iwi/hapū.

Where Te Papa is approached by iwi wishing to domestically repatriate the relevant provenanced kōiwi tangata a project partnership will be established to co-facilitate the return.