

MUSEUM OF NEW
ZEALAND
TE PAPA
TONGAREWA

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3 September 2025

Tēnā koe

Re: Official Information Act (OIA) Request – misplaced or lost collection items

I refer to your OIA request of 30 July 2025 for:

A list of items/objects/artworks that are part of your collection and have been misplaced or lost (i.e audits have collections have not located this item, and it has so far not been located).

Please include the name of the item/object/artwork, its maker (i.e the artist name), date made, approximate value, any available photograph of it, and when it was found to be misplaced/missing/lost, and how (i.e in an internal audit). Please also provide any other relevant comment or information.

Thank you also for the clarification and refinement confirmed on the same day to items found to be missing in the past five years - i.e. 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025.

Te Papa holds approximately 2.4 million objects/taonga across humanities and natural history collections. Collection audit and inventory activities are regularly undertaken as part of our core operations. For example, during activities such as:

- annual external valuation processes, where objects/taonga are requested to be sighted
- loans of objects/taonga to other museums and galleries
- exhibition preparation for the display of objects/taonga
- conservation treatment or assessment work of objects/taonga
- smaller scale audits on specific types of objects/taonga.

As we advised on 27 August 2025, we decided to grant your request. Attached is an excel spreadsheet containing 331 records of collection objects/taonga recorded as missing or unlocated in the past five years.

These records include the following fields:

- Discipline
- Section
- Registration Number
- Title/Qualified Name
- Maker(s)
- Production Date
- How it was found to be missing (e.g. audit, if known)
- Year known to be Missing/Unlocated
- Latest Movement Date
- Latest Movement Reason
- Latest Movement Note
- Latest Valuation Date
- Latest Valuation Reason
- Latest Valuation

Please note that:

- When preparing this response, we used our collection management system to filter to all items identified as missing in the past five years i.e. by the 'Latest Movement Date' and had our team review the dataset to confirm that the objects/taonga were missing or unlocated.
- Some objects/taonga were confirmed as missing prior to the five-year period (see column 'Year Known to be Missing/Unlocated').
- You may see some discrepancies between the 'Year Known to be Missing/Unlocated' and what is stated under 'Latest Movement Note'. This is because of the way our collection database works and the migration from our previous database in 2005. For example, object B.015819 has 2012 as the 'Year Known to be Missing/Unlocated' but under the notes it says *Listed as missing by 2005*.
- Valuations are not available for many objects/taonga, particularly those that have not been recently appraised or are not typically valued for insurance or market purposes.
- Even if an object/taonga is recorded as missing or unlocated, it may be located in the future.

Also attached is a PDF of images of these items (where available) – please use the registration numbers to cross reference.

If you require further information or clarification, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact OIA@tepapa.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Berwick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anna Berwick

Head of Governance and Strategy