



3 February 2026

Tēnā koe

Re: Official Information Act (OIA) Request – taonga Māori and repatriation

Tēnā koe i tō tono Ture Pārongo Ōkawa, i riro mai ētahi wāhanga ōna i te 12 o Tīhema, 2025 mā Te Papa hei whakatutuki, i reira ngā mōhiotanga o raro i tonoa.

Thank you for your OIA request, which was partially transferred to Te Papa on 12 December 2025, requesting the following information:

	<i>Te Reo Request</i>	<i>English translation (translated by the Department of Internal Affairs)</i>
1	<i>e tiaki ana koutou i ngā taonga o te Māori, e tiaki ana rānei i ngā taonga o te Karauna anake?</i>	<i>are you looking after the taonga of the Māori, or are you only looking after the treasures of the Crown?</i>
2	<i>He uri hoki ahau nō te iwi i kite i te tangohanga o ngā taonga i ngā tau 1900 - i haere mai ngā tangata nō tāwāhi, i kawhaki i ngā kōiwi, i ngā mere, i ngā taonga tuku iho, i kawea ki ngā whare taonga o Uropi, o Amerika, o Ahitereiria. E hia o ēnei taonga kei ngā whare taonga o tāwāhi i tēnei wā?</i>	<i>I am also a descendant of the tribe that witnessed the plundering of treasures in the 1900s – people from overseas came, desecrated the bones, the mere, the treasured possessions, and these were taken to museums in Europe, America, and Australia. How many of these treasures are currently in overseas museums?</i>
3	<i>He aha tā DIA e mahi ana ki te whakahoki mai i ēnei taonga?</i>	<i>What is DIA doing to return these treasures?</i>
4	<i>he aha ngā kaupapa mō te tiaki, te whakahoki rānei i ngā taonga Māori? He aha ngā kaupapa kei te haere tonu?</i>	<i>what are the programs for caring for or returning Māori treasures? What programs are ongoing?</i>
5	<i>E hia ngā taonga Māori i whakahokia mai i ngā whenua kē i ngā tau 2019 ki 2024?</i>	<i>How many Māori treasures were returned from overseas countries between 2019 and 2024?</i>

Māku ō urupounamu e whakautu i konei.
I will respond to your questions in turn.

1	Ko tā te Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa ko te tiaki me te whakahaere o te kohinga ā-motu katoa. Hui atu ana ēnei pīkaunga ki ngā taonga Māori, o nāianeī, o nehe hoki, e pupuritia whakawhirinakitia ana mō ngā iwi me ngā hapū, tāpiri hoki ko ngā taonga kua waiho iho e te Karauna e whakatinana ana i ngā hītori, i ngā ahurea, me ngā iwi o Aotearoa e noho taiwhenua nei, i te ao whānui anō hoki. Whai muri i te whakamana o te pire Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992 [5], ka whakamanatia te mātāpono o Mana Taonga e te	The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa cares for and manages the national collection in its entirety. This includes taonga Māori, both traditional and contemporary, held in trust for iwi and hapū, as well as treasures entrusted by the Crown that represent New Zealand's histories, cultures, and peoples nationally and globally. Following the passing of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992 [5], the Mana Taonga principle was endorsed by Ngā Kaiwawao, the Māori advisory to the Te Papa Advisory Board.
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	<p>rūnanga Māori a Ngā Kaiwawao ki tā Te Papa Advisory Board.</p> <p>He mea whakakaahu te mātāpono o Mana Taonga ki te taha o ngā iwi;</p> <p>Ka hāpai te Mana Taonga i ngā hononga wairua, hononga ahurea o ngā taonga ki ngā tāngata;</p> <p>He rite tonu ngā mōtika o tēnā, o tēnā iwi ki Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa;</p> <p>Ka tuku ēnei mōtika i te mana ki ngā iwi ki te tiaki i ō rātou taonga, te whakakōrerotia, me te whakatau i ō rātou whakamahinga e te iwi Māori.</p> <p>Ka mutu, ka tiaki a Te Papa i te tuku ihotanga ahurei o Aotearoa, hei atawhai i ngā momo me ngā pūnaha hauropi e mana ai i tō tātou taiao. Tāpiri hoki, ka tiaki a Te Papa i ētahi taonga whānau, hapū, iwi anō hoki e ai ki ētahi whakaritenga tiaki motuhake.</p>	<p>Mana Taonga was developed through consultation with iwi;</p> <p>Mana Taonga recognises the spiritual and cultural connections of taonga with the people;</p> <p>The rights of iwi to Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa is in equality to all other iwi;</p> <p>These rights accord to iwi the mana to care for their taonga, speak for them, and determine their use by Māori.</p> <p>Te Papa also preserves the unique natural heritage of Aotearoa, safeguarding species and ecosystems that define our environment. In addition, Te Papa also cares for some taonga on behalf of whānau, hapū, and iwi under specific custodial arrangements.</p>
2	<p>Ahakoa e kaha mahi ngātahi ana a Te Papa ki te maha o ngā whare mana kōkiri o tāwāhi, kāore a Te Papa e mau ana ki tētahi rārangi mārika o ngā taonga Māori katoa kei ngā whare mana kōkiri puta noa i te ao. Nā reira, e tārewa tonu ana tō tono i raro i te 18(e) o te Ture Pārongo Ōkawa, nā te mea e noho wāhi ngaro noa ngā mōhiotanga.</p> <p>Hei tāpiri, hei whakahoropakingia ngā mōmōhanga tūpuna (kaua ko ngā taonga), ka ārahi a Te Papa i Te Kaupapa Whakahokinga Mai a Karanga Aotearoa, mā rātou e rangahau, e noho takawaenga, e whakarite i te whakahokinga mai o ngā mōmōhanga tūpuna Māori, karāpuna Moriori anō hoki. Ko tā mātou whakatau tata, kua neke atu i te 450 ngā mōmōhanga Māori me te Moriori e matemate-ā-one tonu ana nō tāwāhi rā. Tēnā, tirohia te wāhanga whakahokinga o tēnei whārangi: The Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme Te Papa.</p>	<p>Although Te Papa has strong relationships with many institutions overseas, Te Papa does not hold a complete inventory of taonga Māori in overseas institutions. For this reason your request is technically refused in accordance with s18(e) of the OIA, as the information you seek does not exist.</p> <p>Separately, and for context regarding ancestral remains (not taonga), Te Papa leads the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme, which undertakes research, negotiates, and facilitates the return of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains. Based on this work, we estimate that more than 450 ancestral remains are still held overseas awaiting return. Further information is available on our website: The Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme Te Papa.</p>
3	<p>Ko Manatu Taonga te pūtahi aroturuki mō Te Papa. Mā Te Papa e ārahi Te Kaupapa Whakahokinga Mai a Karanga Aotearoa mō te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa. Mā tēnei hōtaka ka rangahau a Te Papa i ngā kōrero me ngā whakapapa o ngā mōmōhanga Māori me te Moriori, e hāpai ngā whanaungatanga ki ngā whare taonga me ngā whare mana kōkiri o tāwāhi, e noho takawaenga anō hoki kia hoki mai ngā mōmōhanga ki Aotearoa. Ka ea hoki i a Te Papa ngā tono ōkawa kia whakahoki taonga, ka whakarite ai i te whakawhitinga atu o ngā tūpuna,</p>	<p>The Ministry of Culture and Heritage is the monitoring agency for Te Papa. Te Papa leads the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme on behalf of the New Zealand Government. Through this programme, Te Papa researches the provenance of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains, maintains relationships with overseas museums and collecting institutions, and negotiates their return to Aotearoa. Te Papa also undertakes formal repatriation requests, coordinates the physical transfer of tūpuna, and works alongside iwi and imi to ensure their safe</p>

	<p>ā ka mahi ngātahi ki te taha o ngā iwi me ngā imi ki te whakahokia haumarutia e ai ki te tikanga Māori me te tikane Moriori. Hui atu ēnei mahi ki ngā ripoata rangahau whai kōiriiri, te whakahaere i ngā whakaritenga me te ngā haerenga, me te tautoko i ngā hapori kāinga ki te whakawhiwhi ki ō rātou tūpuna.</p> <p>I te hōtaka o Karanga Aotearoa e aro pū ana ki ngā kōiwi tangata, ka mahi hoki a Te Papa ki ngā iwi me ērā atu whare mana kōkiri ki te tiakanga me te whakahokinga mai o ngā taonga Māori i ngā wā e tika ana.</p>	<p>return home in accordance with tikanga Māori and tikane Moriori. This includes preparing detailed research reports, managing logistics and travel, and supporting home communities to receive their tūpuna.</p> <p>While the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation programme focuses on kōiwi tangata, Te Papa also works with iwi and other institutions on the care and return of taonga Māori where appropriate.</p>
4	<p>Nā te whakatau a te rūnanga o te kāwanatanga i te Mei o 2003 i whakatū Te Kaupapa Whakahokinga Mai a Karanga Aotearoa, he whakaruruhau mana kōkiri nā te kāwanatanga e whakapau kaha ana ki te whakahoki i ngā mōmōhanga tūpuna Māori, karāpuna Moriori anō hoki, mō ngāi Māori me ngāi Moriori. Kei tēnei hōtaka he rōpū e ū ana ki te whakahokinga mai me te tiakanga o ngā tūpuna Māori me ngā karāpuna Moriori mā te pūmau rawa ki te tikanga Māori me te tikane Moriori.</p> <p>Hei huarahi anō ko te Iwi in Residence programme me National Services Te Paerangi mā Te Papa hei mahi ngātahi ki ngā iwi me ngā pakihi Māori ki te ārahi i te tiakanga me te whakahokinga mai o ngā taonga.</p>	<p>A cabinet decision made in May 2003 led to the establishment of Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation programme, a government mandated authority that continues to repatriate Māori and Moriori ancestral remains on behalf of Māori and Moriori. This programme consists of a team dedicated to returning and caring for tūpuna Māori and karapuna Moriori with tikanga Māori and tikane Moriori at its core.</p> <p>The Iwi in Residence programme and National Services Te Paerangi are other ways that Te Papa works specifically with iwi and Māori organisations including giving advice on the tiaki and return of taonga.</p>
5	<p>Mai i te tau 2019 ki te 2024 hui tahi, ka hāpai a Te Papa i ngā whakahokitanga o ngā taonga e ono mai i ngā whare mana kōkiri o tāwāhi ki Aotearoa nei.</p> <p>2020: He toki pounamu mai i Ahitereiria 2021: He taiaha tōmua mai i Hōria i Amerika Tōpū, me tētahi tūpara mai i Kānata (nā Te Mana Ārai o Aotearoa) 2022: He kuru tōmua (haerenga tuarua a Kuki) mai i Rānana i Peretānia 2023: He whakapakoko (atua?) mai i Rānana i Peretānia 2024: He wēkete whai raranga mai i Ngā Ānahera i Amerika Tōpū.</p> <p>Ka mutu, he 438 ngā kōiwi tangata kua whakahokia e mātou. I roto i ētahi o ngā whakahokitanga he taonga tangihanga, pērā i ngā waka tūpāpaku.</p>	<p>Between 2019 and 2024, Te Papa facilitated the return of six taonga Māori from overseas institutions to Aotearoa.</p> <p>2020: A toki pounamu from Australia 2021: An early taiaha from Georgia, USA, and a tūpara from Canada (via NZ Customs) 2022: An early kuru (second Cook voyage) from London, UK 2023: A whakapakoko (atua?) from London, UK 2024: A plaited raranga vest from Los Angeles, USA</p> <p>In addition, we returned 438 kōiwi tangata. Some of the repatriations also included associated funerary items such as waka tūpāpaku.</p>

Ki te kore tonu o urupounamu e ngata ana, kei a koe te mana ki te kimi ketuketutanga me te arotake mā te Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata. E wātea ana ngā mōhiohio māu hei tuku nawe ki www.ombudsman.parliament.nz mā te waea utukore rānei 0800 802 602.

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.

Ki te hiahia koe ki te matapakihia ētahi wāhanga o tō tono, tēnā, whakapā mai ki OIA@tepapa.govt.nz.
If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact OIA@tepapa.govt.nz.

Hei konā me ngā mihi maioha
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Arapata Hakiwai

Kaihautū