

Questions and Answers

1. How many repatriations have there been to date?

In 2003 Te Papa was formally mandated by the New Zealand Government to seek the repatriation of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains housed in institutions around the world. This programme is called the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme. Since the programme began Te Papa has repatriated approximately 354 Māori and Moriori ancestral remains from overseas institutions.

2. How many more ancestral remains are there still to return home?

Te Papa estimates there are at least 550 Māori and Moriori ancestral remains still to be returned to New Zealand. Most of these are in European institutions.

3. Who is meeting the costs of this repatriation from Vienna?

In 2003 Te Papa was mandated by the New Zealand Government and resourced appropriately to undertake these repatriations. Te Papa has budgeted approximately \$50,000 towards ensuring the ancestral remains return safely to New Zealand. These costs includes packing, freighting and travel for a small delegation from Te Papa to receive and participate in the handover ceremonies for the *tūpuna* (ancestors) in Vienna.

4. What happens to the *Toi moko* (preserved Māori tattooed heads) and *kōiwi tangata* (Māori skeletal remains) when they arrive at Te Papa in New Zealand?

When the *Toi moko* and *kōiwi tangata* arrive at Te Papa, a *pōwhiri* (ceremonial welcome) will be conducted by Te Papa and the local Māori community. This ceremony acknowledges their homecoming, and greets the ancestors with tears of affection and warmth.

They will then go through a period of quarantine and conservation assessment. Te Papa does not place the *Toi moko*, and/or *kōiwi tangata* into its collections, but does have a guardianship role and will care for and house the Māori and Moriori ancestral remains until they return to their kith and kin in New Zealand.

Once back in Aotearoa New Zealand further research will be undertaken to verify and confirm provenance.

5. What research will be undertaken on the ancestral remains?

Research allows Te Papa to reconnect these ancestors with their place of origin, however, this will take time to complete.

Te Papa's research involves a lot of detective work, and over the next five to ten years we will concentrate on four streams of research, including:

- a. Verifying accession information held by individual museums about the *Toi moko* and *kōiwi tangata* they house;
- b. Verifying historical information that is contained in Māori oral histories and early accounts by European and American explorers, collectors and traders from the time of 1770,
- c. In particular the inter-tribal battles that may have led to the trade of their enemies' heads; and
- d. Working with experts in *tā moko* (Māori tattooing) to possibly identify provenance through *moko* (tattoo) designs and patterns on the *Toi moko*.

6. Does Te Papa conduct DNA testing?

Te Papa does not conduct DNA testing on Māori ancestral remains, however, this may be considered as a possible avenue to follow in the future.

7. What is a *Toi moko*?

A *Toi moko* is a preserved Māori tattooed head. These heads were a traditional part of Māori culture and were created to either revere a loved one or revile an enemy.

In traditional times a *Toi moko* of an important chief belonging to an enemy could be returned to the mourning *whānau* (family) as a means of creating peace between the tribal groups. When Europeans began to arrive in *Aotearoa* (New Zealand), they became curious about the *Toi moko*, and through this contact the added dimension of trading in mummified heads became an important part of interaction between local Māori tribes and visiting Europeans, Australians and Americans.

Toi moko are also known as *mokomōkai*, *mokamōkai*, *ūpoko tuhi*, and *mōkai*.

8. Is a *Toi moko* a ‘shrunk head’ of a ‘slave’, ‘chief’ or ‘warrior’?

Although from time to time, *Toi moko* have been referred to as ‘shrunk heads’ this is not the correct term for these Māori ancestral remains. Importantly some *Toi moko* are the heads of Māori chiefs and warriors that may have died of natural causes or fallen in battle. There is also evidence that some of the *Toi moko* are heads of ‘slaves’ that were purposefully created for the trade to Europeans, Americans, and Australians.

9. Who and what is a *kōiwi tangata*?

Kōiwi tangata is the Māori word for Māori skeletal remains. Although it has been mentioned above that prior to 1840 the mummified heads of enemy chiefs and warriors were actively traded overseas, most of the Māori skeletal remains left later through activities associated with newly established colonial and regional museums in New Zealand after the 1860s. Many of the directors of these institutions also collaborated in this trade.

10. How long did the trade of ancestral remains go on for?

The trade in *Toi moko* and *kōiwi tangata* began from 1770 and lasted up until the 1970s. After the New Zealand Wars in the 1860s and 1870s Māori communities became extremely vulnerable to such activities, in particular when Māori and Moriori remains were highly sought after by newly established museums in New Zealand, Australia, Europe, and North America. The trade in indigenous remains around the world was created by a hidden network of collectors, traders and entrepreneurs, who preyed on suffering indigenous communities at the time.

11. What is the significance of this repatriation to Māori communities?

The Māori people are humbled by the gracious gesture of the Austrian Government and the Weltmuseum in Vienna.

Returning the remains of these ancestors allows Māori living today to reconcile and honour the past. For Māori communities the connection between the past and present is at the forefront of their collective memory.

Although the identity of the *Toi moko* is unknown, we honour them by bringing them home and offering them a resting place where their *wairua* (spirit) may rest.

12. How many of the repatriated remains have been returned to their place of origin?

Te Papa has returned 123 ancestral remains to their place of origin. Some of these *tūpuna* (ancestors) repatriated to locations in New Zealand are ancestral heads or skulls, which in the past may have been *Toi moko*.