

## **QVMAG Human Remains Policy**

### ***PURPOSE:***

To state the City of Launceston's commitment to the sensitive and culturally appropriate management of Human Remains in the collections of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG).

### ***SCOPE:***

The policy applies to all human remains of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people irrespective of age. The policy will also be used as the basis for managing human remains of all other peoples irrespective of race.

### ***POLICY:***

#### **Preamble**

The QVMAG should not hold any items which are not of scientific or cultural importance.

The utmost sensitivity must be observed in dealing with human remains.

#### **General**

- 1.1 No conditions will be placed unilaterally by the QVMAG on the return of human remains.

#### **Acquisition**

- 1.2 The QVMAG will not seek to acquire human remains.

#### **Return**

- 1.3 The ancestral remains of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be dealt with in accordance with the wishes of the deceased or their relatives or their community Elders.
- 1.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the community from which the person came must be involved in determining the future disposition of remains which are returned by the QVMAG.
- 1.5 All requests for the return of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remains will be promptly and sensitively dealt with by the QVMAG.

#### **Custodianship**

- 1.6 The Museum, acting in the role of custodian, may retain or hold human remains on behalf of the relevant community if requested to do so by them and shall abide by any reasonable conditions sought by the community.

#### **Storage, access and display**

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- 1.7 Human remains, if retained by the Museum, will be properly stored in an area separate from other parts of the collection and treated with respect at all times.
- 1.8 Access to human remains held by the Museum will be carefully controlled in accordance with the wishes of the relevant cultural groups.
- 1.9 Human remains will not be displayed to the public, except in special circumstances where parts of remains are an integral part of other items such as human teeth incorporated in an item of personal attire, the display of which is agreed to by the relevant community, their descendants or those authorised by them.

### **Scientific and cultural significance**

- 1.10 The QVMAG recognises the potential value that human remains may have to the scientific advance of knowledge. However, any research undertaken on ancestral remains must have the free and informed consent of traditional custodians and comply with appropriate ethical research guidelines.

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### **PRINCIPLES:**

Council's Organisational Values apply to all activities.

### **RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES:**

Current procedures arising from the implementation of the existing policy will be reviewed in accordance with the revised policy.

### **RELATED LEGISLATION:**

Museums (Aboriginal Remains) Act 1984.  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984

### **REFERENCES:**

Continuous Culture ongoing responsibilities: Guidelines for Dealing with Australian Indigenous Heritage, Museums Australia 2005

The following National Museum of Australia policies and further information relating to repatriation are published at:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/history/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-cultures-histories/repatriation:](http://www.nma.gov.au/history/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-cultures-histories/repatriation)

[National Museum of Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander human remains policy \(PDF 68kb\)](#)

[National Museum of Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secret/sacred and private material policy \(PDF 69kb\)](#)

[National Museum of Australia Return of cultural objects policy \(PDF 68kb\)](#)

### **DEFINITIONS:**

N/A.

### **REVIEW:**

This policy will be reviewed no more than 5 years after the date of approval (version) or more frequently, if dictated by operational demands and with Council's approval.