

VII.

Hidden Objects – Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections

Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations,
and Potential Repatriation

First Principles

Hidden Objects – Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections

Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations,
and Potential Repatriation

First Principles

Michael Pickering

Abstract

The more spatially and/or temporally distant a collection is from its culture of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular relevance to the repatriation of First Nations cultural materials. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain First Nations individuals and communities that have been the subject of their research and collections projects, they often lack detailed knowledge of other spatially and temporally distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation request, they may be at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This chapter describes the general methodologies that are applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred and significant objects by the Repatriation team at the National Museum of Australia¹. It is intended to provide an introductory guide to non-Australian collectors and collecting institutions seeking to either initiate, or respond to, requests for repatriation of such objects to First Nations peoples in Australia.

Michael Pickering, First Principles, in: Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts. Principles, Approaches, Challenges, hrsg. von C. Andratschke et al., Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net-ART-Books, 2023 (Veröffentlichungen des Netzwerks Provenienzforschung in Niedersachsen, Band 5), S. 368–380. <https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.1270.c18910>

Principes fondamentaux (Résumé)

Plus une collection est éloignée spatialement et/ou temporellement de sa culture d'origine, plus il est difficile d'appliquer des processus culturellement appropriés pour son utilisation et sa gestion. Ceci est particulièrement important pour le rapatriement du matériel culturel des Premières nations. Si les gestionnaires de collections peuvent avoir d'étroites relations avec certaines personnes et communautés des Premières nations qui ont fait l'objet de leurs recherches et de leurs projets de collecte, ils manquent souvent de connaissances détaillées sur d'autres cultures et communautés éloignées dans l'espace et dans le temps. Par conséquent, lors du traitement d'une demande de rapatriement, ils ignorent parfois par où commencer et ce à quoi il faut faire attention.

Ce chapitre décrit les méthodologies générales appliquées par l'équipe de rapatriement du musée national d'Australie pour le rapatriement d'objets secrets/sacrés et significatifs du centre de l'Australie. Il s'agit d'un guide d'introduction destiné aux collectionneurs et aux institutions de collecte non australiens qui souhaitent initier ou répondre à des demandes de rapatriement de ces objets aux peuples des Premières nations d'Australie.

Introduction

The title of this paper – First Principles – is intended to address a basic, but very important, issue in repatriation: “Where do I start?”

There is a considerable body of readily available research that addresses the cultural significance and contexts of Central Australian secret/sacred and significant objects.² These cultural values are the primary reasons behind of the desire for such objects to be returned to their Traditional Owners. However, there is little information available as to how museums might initiate, or respond to, a repatriation activity. Determining where to start is the focus of this paper.

Initial requests from Australian First Nations³ communities, or their representatives, to museums, institutions, and individuals, for the repatriation of secret/sacred and significant objects, can be intimidating. The request itself may be courteous but raises an issue about which the curator has little or no previous experience or knowledge. Requests for repatriations by commu-

nities can also occasionally be phrased in forceful, direct, and often legalistic, language, which is the standard communication style for those experienced with repatriation requests, but which is, again, a totally new experience for the unaware and inexperienced curator.⁴

It is also not unusual for western collection managers of First Nations cultural materials to have a very limited knowledge of many of the cultures represented in their collections. Early collecting practices gathered objects world-wide, and many First Nations cultures are represented in any single institution. However, the collection manager, no matter how experienced in the culture of their special interest group, cannot be expected to identify and understand all the social and historical contexts of all the materials of all the cultures represented in their collections.

Australian First Nations collections held in overseas holdings are often treated by managing curators as separated in both time and space from their associated cultures. Collections from the First Nations groups often came to a halt in those institutions many decades ago. They are typically displayed as relics of a bygone age; of people, cultures and practices that no longer exist, cultures frozen in time, or of groups who no longer practice those lifestyles represented in an institution's collections. They are presented as curios from a lost past. They are also often displayed generically, with a mix of objects from culturally distinct groups presented under the umbrella term of "Australian Aboriginal Culture".⁵

Living Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not necessarily see old and remote collections in this way. There are many Australian First Nations cultural groups, and as many opinions as to the contemporary cultural status and value of collections. There are those who demand repatriation, and there are those who are happy for objects to remain where they are, such as in museums, galleries, university, or individuals' collections. However, based on my experience, all see the objects as part of their cultural heritage, whether they previously knew of the existence of the collections or not. All First Nations peoples also have something to offer in understanding the cultural and historic backgrounds of those materials, whether they have direct experience with them or not. Considerable knowledge still exists and is continuously transmitted through active cultural processes and practices. This knowledge includes the symbolic, such as the inherent meaning conveyed through artistic iconography, and the practical, such as the manufacture and use of technologies.

Museums tend to be conservative places, with a culture of their own. The mystique of the museum explorer persists in some spaces – even in Australia. The idea is that the curator must do the field research and consultation – an expensive and long-term proposition. For the purpose of repatriation discussions, such travels are not essential, although face-to-face contact between claimants and curators is always rewarding, personally and professionally, for participants of both groups. The opportunity to meet in-person, to discuss matters of interest without mediation, such as through media or bureaucratic time-managers, and to see the lands from which the people, and collections, come, is an invaluable experience.

Nonetheless, we can't all travel, and we are not all experts in the cultures represented in our collections. As an example, while I have a good generalist knowledge of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and the cultural contexts of certain material culture that originated in Australia, I have limited knowledge of African societies. What I do know is that, in the event of a request for repatriation from an African source, is that I will need expert local advice before I respond or engage at length. Therefore, what I advocate in this paper is for prospective practitioners to do some homework and seek expert 'local' advice first.

Doing homework

The starting point to engagement with Australia First Nations peoples, is to have an idea of the significance of secret/sacred objects in the cultures of origin. Doing homework is relatively simple. As noted above, there are numerous published historical and scholarly research-based descriptions of Australian secret/sacred objects and their cultural contexts. Many of these are available through institutional libraries. Caution is required in their use, especially of earlier historical reports, because they invariably reveal restricted images and information. This is information that would not, in both traditional and contemporary cultural contexts, be made available to uninitiated men, to women and children (in the case of men's objects), or men (in the case of women's objects).

But historical texts alone are not sufficient to understand the significance of such objects to today's communities. Indeed, relying on historical texts to develop a cultural template can be both misleading and inappropriate.

Today's First Nations communities may have different cultural reasons for seeking repatriation. The request may be based on historical significance rather than religious significance, or vice versa. However, the requests are genuine, and have been arrived at through legitimate processes of cultural change and community consensus as to significance. As a result, it is also necessary to understand contemporary cultural contexts and significance for material cultures collections. Strangely, the most up-to-date and readily available sources for such information is through mainstream news media. Many repatriation activities are well-covered by news media events,⁶ particularly in Australia, and many First Nations speakers communicate their reasons for desiring the return of objects through such media. The next step is, ask the "experts".

Experts

Who are the experts, and what are they experts in? Of course, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the objects under consideration must be acknowledged as the Experts in their own cultures. But identifying and engaging with the appropriate First Nations people can be a major challenge for researchers outside of Australia.

I work as a museum curator and repatriation officer. I am an "expert" in the practical processes of repatriation. I am knowledgeable about, but do not consider myself an expert in, the deeper cultural contexts of secret/sacred objects in Australian First Nations groups. As well as First Nations Elders, there are many anthropologists and heritage agencies staff and professionals who, due to their long local engagement with First Nations communities, have greater knowledge of the past and current cultural contexts and significance of the objects in question. It is part of my job to know who these agencies and individuals might be.

My approach to a repatriation event is, therefore, to firstly identify or confirm that the potential claimant has *prima facie* right to make the request and, in most cases, that they have a formal responsibility and legal accountability to represent First Nations stakeholders.

In Australia, the major museums often have close relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the management and representation of their cultures. This engagement has come about through "doorstep activism" on the part of First Nations people.

Because museums, museum staff and First Nations peoples are immediate neighbours, and because debates over First Nations and non-First Nations relationships occur daily. The decision by Australian museums to engage with Australian First Nations people is not a fearful response to intimidation. The thorough arguments and debates that have been generated through engagements has led to a greater appreciation of the continuance and vitality of Australian First Nations cultures, and recognition of their right to be involved in the management of their cultural heritage – old, current, and emerging.

Australia's publicly funded Federal, State and Territory museums have a long-standing commitment to repatriation of Ancestral Remains and secret/sacred objects⁷. The Australian Government has an explicit policy supporting the return of remains and secret/sacred objects,⁸ and provides some support funding for repatriation activities through the Office for the Arts.⁹

Australian museums have been engaging for decades with the First Nations communities represented in their collection holdings, and in their state or territory in particular. They have built up a wealth of knowledge, experience, and relationships, and can usually advise on which First Nations groups or representative agencies to contact.

It is not hard to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, either directly, or through their authorised representatives. Advice as to who to contact over issues of First Nations heritage is readily available through numerous agencies, including:

- State and Territory Museums¹⁰
- Land Councils¹¹
- Native Title Representative Bodies¹²
- Legal Aid Services¹³
- Community Councils¹⁴
- Art and Cultural Centres¹⁵
- State and territory government heritage offices¹⁶
- Universities¹⁷
- Researchers¹⁸

Any of these sources can either provide advice or refer you to who you should contact. They are discoverable through an online search, or through individual and museums' industry contacts,¹⁹ and are contactable by phone and e-mail. Publicly funded agencies such as museums and government heritage agencies often have an obligation to provide some 'entry level' information and advice free of charge. In many cases, it is not necessary to go to Australia

to trace contacts – there are researchers across the world who work with First Nations people in Australia and can assist directly or provide advice and further contacts. The products of such engagements can be many and varied. In all scenarios, however, the result is the sharing of information.

There is no guarantee that engagements will be successful. There are some issues that require cautious management and appreciation. There is also no obligation on any First Nations person or agency to assist. In addition, there may be internal community politics that may affect or complicate an engagement. It may be difficult to identify a relevant culturally authorised spokesperson. While repatriation is an important issue for them, other social issues such as health, education, and housing, will also take priority.

Working through representative agencies provides an extra level of protection for museums. Such agencies usually have strong internal systems of governance and accountability, acknowledging their role in representing First Nations interests over the interests of their employed individuals. For example, on rare occasions, individual researchers, may ask favoured and sympathetic informants for advice or decisions about cultural materials, knowing they will get the advice the researcher personally prefers. This is convenient for the researcher, but risky for the distanced museum. Working with agencies to ensure community consensus helps avoid such problems.

Representative agencies, however, as legally established organisations, have accountability. Both to their First Nations clients and to official protocols of corporate governance. Working with such agencies, at least in the beginning, provides a degree of insurance for the participating museum and serves as a demonstration of ethical practice²⁰.

Secret/Sacred Objects

In its repatriation activities over its 27 years, the National Museum of Australia has relied heavily on the support of many of these representative agencies in its successful repatriation of Ancestral Remains and secret/sacred objects.

In 2004, three hundred and eight secret/sacred objects were returned to Western Australian communities through a multi-museum collaboration.²¹ State museums were approached by the National Museum regarding objects in their care available for repatriation. The Western Australian Museum

agreed to contact communities in Western Australia with whom it had long standing relationships, good knowledge, and reputation. At the instruction of communities, objects were sent to the Western Australian Museum for redistribution to First Nations communities. These communities were represented in their claims by legally and culturally accountable heritage agencies such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre and Wangka Maya Language Centre in the Pilbara. A condition of the repatriation was that the Western Australian Museum was assisting the communities, and not being given legal possession of the objects. The objects were returned to communities over time as resources and facilities became available.

In 2006, fifty-four secret/sacred objects were returned to Central Australian communities through the National Museum engaging the Central Land Council to carry out consultations.²² Consultations can be time consuming and cannot always happen in a compressed or consecutive time frame. If the options are to engage a private consultant for 50 consecutive days – or engaging a representative agency such as the Land Council for 50 non-consecutive days over a year, then the latter option is far more sympathetic to cultural time frames, the need for group discussions, seasonal disruptions, and travel over long distances.

At the time of writing, consultations are ongoing between the National Museum, Central Australian, and Northern Australian communities over a further 20 secret/sacred objects. Because of COVID-19 lockdowns and travel bans, face to face engagements have been restricted, but teleconferencing and e-mail has allowed continued consultation.

An important aspect of these consultations has been that they rely on consensus. Through community discussions, claims will be endorsed or challenged, knowledge will be shared, decisions will be thoughtful. Consensus is important. There are examples of repatriation related events (not necessarily secret/ sacred) where individual researchers have sought responses that reflect their own views on repatriation or, even more concerning, received “approvals” for unsanctioned research by working with individuals who are not fully informed of the possible consequences of the research.²³

Cautionary tales

Whether or not the approached institution supports or opposes repatriation of secret/sacred objects, it still has a professional obligation to be informed about the cultural context of such objects. This will better enable them to tell the appropriate stories about those objects and, I hope, through self-education resulting in better awareness of the cultures involved, lead them to the conclusion that repatriation may be the appropriate action. To use opposition to repatriation as an excuse to avoid learning about the cultural significance of the objects in their care is basically unethical. Some examples.

Bad story 1: The National Museum of Denmark

In the exhibition Ethnographical Treasure Rooms at the National Museum, you can see collections from Micronesia, including a warrior from the Gilbert Islands, boats, fishing tools, ceremonial equipment, objects made from raffia and jewellery, together with others relating to hunting, war, daily life and the cults of the Aborigines of Australia.²⁴

In 2018, the author visited the National Museum of Denmark. The exhibition of Australian First Nations people included a small, mixed selection of objects from Central Australia, the Northern Territory, North Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia, with secular and secret/sacred items intermingled. Dozens of language groups were represented in the one exhibition case, without any care taken to distinguish or explain the variety of significance. A significant number of the objects were secret/sacred and sensitive religious, ceremonial, and sorcery objects that would normally be restricted from view in Australian First Nations groups.

The presentation probably reflects an old exhibition staying on display for decades, rather than a more recent exploration of Australian First Nations cultures – noting, however, that a more recent “Indigenous themed” art mural in the exhibition foyer demonstrates an acknowledgement of the need to occasionally upgrade exhibition spaces. As with many museums, some exhibitions remain up for far too long due to shifting priorities and resources. While the current interpretation of this old exhibition style is to show diversity

of Australian cultures, the exhibition does little, if anything, to educate visitors about those cultures. Again, in the light of debates about what is the appropriate way to manage such sensitive objects and the ready availability of advice through literature, web searches, professional journals, or consultation, there is no reason such exhibits should persist. That the exhibition is old and was prepared 'before we knew what we know now' is no excuse.

Bad Story 2: The Museum of Tomorrow, Brazil

In 2015, the *Museum of Tomorrow* opened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. A feature of this museum is a gallery displaying a single item: an Australian Aboriginal secret/sacred object, probably from north-western Australia. The object is one that was traditionally restricted in viewing and contact. Here it is displayed to all. It is presented without description of its original cultural context; rather it has a culturally un-informed interpretation by curators and designers. The website text states:

The area called Us, the last part of the Main Exhibition, features a light and sound display. The setting is based on an 'oca'. An indigenous house of knowledge, where the elders share cultural information and wisdom with younger generations. The 'tjurunga', an object used by Australian aborigines to symbolize the passing on of knowledge, is central to this area. It is among the most ancient artefacts ever created and is the only physical object in the main exhibit.²⁵

And continues:

General director of the Roberto Marinho Foundation, Hugo Barreto, sees the 'tjurunga' as a symbol of the museum itself. Like the museum, its shape is elongated and it transmits knowledge. Mr. Barreto explains, 'The exhibits are our 'inscriptions' in the museum, which help visitors understand the connection between the past and the future.'

This is an exhibition of wilful ignorance, unforgivable today. The object has been appropriated, its cultural and religious context lost and desecrated, to the point where it is displayed in a gallery inspired by Amazonian First Nations longhouses, mixing at least two distinct and unrelated cultural traditions. Its meaning reinterpreted by designers and architects. The promotional image for the Museum is now the main image for the Wikipedia entry for "Tjurunga".²⁶ At the bottom of the page in very small print is the statement:

“Aboriginal readers from Central and Western Desert regions are respectfully advised that viewing or displaying images of sacred objects may be considered inappropriate by their communities.”

Good Story: Museum Natur und Mensch, Freiburg

But now let me wrap up on a happier note. In 2020 the Freiburg *Museum Natur und Mensch* opened an exhibition of objects celebrating its 125th anniversary. The museum approached the National Museum of Australia seeking a suggestion as to what objects might be suitable for display. The listing included (but was not limited to) Central Australian secret/sacred objects. Given my specialist interests in secret/sacred objects, I suggested a display in which secret/sacred objects were a focus, but not displayed. Rather, the display includes the narrative that, due to the advocacy of Australian First Nations communities, Australian museums now consider it inappropriate to display such objects. The museum courageously accepted this suggestion, although safer object options were available. The exhibition was successful and curator Stefanie Schien subsequently advised me that this approach proved quite entertaining, stating: “It enriches the exhibition, making it all the more surprising and fascinating!”²⁷

In their catalogue²⁸ they deliberately left a blank where the image would have appeared. Whether or not the museum chooses to pursue or respond to future repatriation requests, its educational resources and internal exhibition and research processes have hopefully improved through taking this approach.

Conclusion

It is not hard to develop a better understanding of the past and contemporary cultural place and significance of secret/sacred objects, indeed all cultural materials, that relate to Australian First Nations peoples. Simple e-mails and phone calls will do the job, and people are generally happy to chat and share their knowledge and experience in a positive and generous manner. Australian public museums, in particular, are spending on the public purse, and assisting with inquiries about such issues all the time. If we can't provide advice and assistance, we can refer you quickly to those who can.²⁹

- 1 I'd like to thank Ann Robb, Anne Faris, Patrya Kaye, Yvette Wajon, Carly Davenport and the Editor Team for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper. For further information regarding the Repatriation Program of the National Museum of Australia see <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/repatriation>, accessed 14 January 2023. This site provides access to policies, activities and publications.
- 2 For example, see Anderson, Christopher (Ed) (1995): *Politics of the Secret*. Oceania Monographs, Vol. 45, University of Sydney; Akerman, Kim (2010): "'You Keep It – We are Christians Here': Repatriation of the Secret Sacred Where Indigenous World Views Have Changed", in: Paul Turnbull, Michael Pickering (Eds): *The Long Way Home: The Meaning and Values of Repatriation*, New York, pp. 175–182; Gibson, Jason M. (2020): *Ceremony Men: Making Ethnography and the Return of the Strehlow Collection*, New York; Pickering, Michael (2015): "The Big Picture: The Repatriation of Australian Indigenous Sacred Objects", in: *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 30, no. 5, accessed 14 January 2023; Kaus, David (2008): "The Management of Restricted Aboriginal Objects by the National Museum of Australia", in: *ReCollections*, Vol. 3, no. 1, https://reCollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_3_no_1/notes_and_comments/the_management_of_restricted_aboriginal_objects, accessed 13 January 2023; Gibson, Jason (2019): "You're my Kwertengerl': Transforming Models of Care for Central Australian Aboriginal Museum Collections", in: *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 240–256.
- 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 4 I now use "Curator" to include collections managers.
- 5 See the discussion of the National Museum of Denmark later in this chapter.
- 6 For example, see the news links on the South Australian Museums Repatriation web site <https://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/the-museum/about/aboriginal-heritage-and-repatriation>, accessed 12 January 2023. An online search of "Repatriation of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage" will also bring up links to news events.
- 7 For Australian museum policies on repatriation see: <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/corporate/plans-policies/policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-human-remains>; <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/corporate/plans-policies/policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-secret-sacred-private-material>; <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/corporate/plans-policies/policies/collections-return-of-cultural-objects>; <https://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/the-museum/about/aboriginal-heritage-and-repatriation>; <https://museums victoria.com.au/collections-research/repatriation-of-ancestral-remains/>; <https://australian.museum/about/organisation/reports/>; https://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/collections_and_research/policies/deaccessioning_and_disposal_policy; [https://network.qm.qld.gov.au/~media/Documents/QMN/About+us/Corporate+Information/Strategic+Collection+Management/qm78-qmn-collection-policy.pdf](https://network.qm.qld.gov.au/~/media/Documents/QMN/About+us/Corporate+Information/Strategic+Collection+Management/qm78-qmn-collection-policy.pdf); <https://museum.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Collections%20Policy%20and%20Procedures.pdf>, all accessed 14 January 2023.
- 8 Australian Government Policy on Indigenous Repatriation 2019, <https://www.arts.gov.au/documents/australian-government-policy-indigenous-repatriation>, accessed 14 January 2022.
- 9 <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/cultural-heritage/indigenous-repatriation>, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 10 For example: National Museum of Australia, Australian Museum (NSW), Museum Victoria, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, South Australian Museum, Western Australian Museum, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Queensland Museum
- 11 For example: Central Land Council, Northern Land Council, New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council.
- 12 For example: National Indigenous Australians Agency: Native Title Representative bodies and service providers, <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/land-and-housing/native-title-representative-bodies-and-service-providers>, accessed 12 January 2023.

- 13 For example: The South Australian Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement was instrumental in arranging the repatriation of several hundred Ancestral remains from Edinburgh University in the 1990's, <https://www.alsnswact.org.au/>, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 14 See National Indigenous Australians Agency Communities List <https://www.indigenous.gov.au/communities/list-view>, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 15 For example: See Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre, <http://kalacc.org/>; Nyinkka nyunyu Art and Culture Centre, <https://www.nyinkkanyunyu.org.au/>, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 16 A listing of Australian state and territory heritage agencies is provided by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment on <https://www.awe.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/organisations>, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 17 For example: Anthropology Departments at the Australian National University (<https://archanth.cass.anu.edu.au/disciplines/anthropology>), the University of Melbourne (<https://study.unimelb.edu.au/find/courses/major/anthropology/>), the University of Adelaide (<https://arts.adelaide.edu.au/study-with-us/undergraduate/anthropology>), the University of Sydney (<https://www.sydney.edu.au/arts/schools/school-of-social-and-political-sciences/departments-of-anthropology.html>), the University of Queensland (<https://social-science.uq.edu.au/research/anthropology>), the University of Western Australia (<https://www.uwa.edu.au/study/courses/anthropology-and-sociology>), all accessed 14 January 2023.
- 18 See the Australian Anthropological Society, <https://www.aas.asn.au/>. The site has a search capacity to identify anthropologists and specialities, see https://www.aas.asn.au/content.aspx?page_id=154&club_id=143481, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 19 There is an informal international network of repatriation practitioners and researchers. Asking locally will eventually provide some guidance.
- 20 For example, see AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (AIATSIS Code of Ethics) 2020, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics>, accessed 24 January 2023.
- 21 National Museum of Australia (2004): *Annual Report 2003-4*. National Museum of Australia, Canberra, p. 17, <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/corporate/annual-reports/annual-report-2003-04>, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 22 National Museum of Australia (2006): *Annual Report 2005-6*. National Museum of Australia Canberra, p. 21, <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/corporate/annual-reports/annual-report-2005-06>, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 23 Pickering, Michael (2020): *A Repatriation Handbook: A Guide to Repatriating Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Remains*, <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/publications/repatriation-handbook>, accessed 14 January 2023, provides guidance on a range of protocols and issues associated with the repatriation on Ancestral human remains. Many of these protocols and issues are applicable to the repatriation of secret/sacred and significant objects.
- 24 See Oceania, <https://en.natmus.dk/historical-knowledge/historical-knowledge-the-world/oceania/>, accessed 14 January 2023; CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WARNING: includes images of restricted sacred objects: [https://samlinger.natmus.dk/objectbrowse?collection=ES&media=ima](https://samlinger.natmus.dk/objectbrowse?collection=ES&media=image,rotation&keyword=Australia)ge,rotation&keyword=Australia, accessed 14 January 2023.
- 25 CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WARNING: This website contains images of secret/sacred objects: <https://museudoamanha.org.br/en/us>, accessed 24 January 2023.
- 26 CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WARNING: This website contains an image of a secret/sacred object: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tjurunga>, accessed 24 January 2023.
- 27 Stefanie Schien, Personal Communication, June 2020.
- 28 Brüderlin, T., Schien, S., and Stoll, S. (2020): *Ausgepackt! 125 Jahre Geschichte(n) im Museum Natur und Mensch*: Exhibition Catalogue, Städtische Museen Freiburg, Petersberg, pp. 50–51.
- 29 See <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/publications/repatriation-handbook#>; accessed 24 January 2023.