

Discussion Paper on a review of the International Repatriation Program

**International Repatriation Advisory Committee
invites your comments on this paper**

March 2010

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**INTERNATIONAL REPATRIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REVIEW OF THE
INTERNATIONAL REPATRIATION PROGRAM**

DISCUSSION PAPER

The International Repatriation Advisory Committee (the Committee) has prepared this discussion paper to seek your views on the International Repatriation Program and how it is implemented. The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) International Repatriation program aims to return the human remains of Australia's Indigenous peoples held in overseas countries. These are often referred to as ancestral human remains because they are the ancestors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In this paper the Committee refers to ancestral remains as Old People, in part as a mark of respect and in part to raise awareness that the remains are first and foremost real people, they are family.

1. Introduction

On 23 October 2009, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, appointed the Committee to advise on the most effective way to deliver the Department of FaHCSIA's International Repatriation Program. This includes a review of the current policy, so that the existing investment in the International Repatriation Program can be made more strategic and inclusive of Indigenous aspirations. The members of the committee are:

- Chrissy Grant (co-chair)
- Phil Gordon (co-chair)
- Olivia Robinson
- Bob Weatherall
- Neil Carter
- Henry Atkinson
- Jeanette Crew
- Chris Wilson

An overview of the Committee members and their appointments is at **Appendix 1**.

This paper outlines the current issues arising under the International Repatriation Program and seeks comment on those issues in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the International Repatriation Program.

Feedback is sought from Indigenous individuals/organisations/peak bodies, state-wide heritage committees and major museums. Based on this feedback a position paper will then be provided by the Committee to Government.

2. Historical Background

For more than 150 years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Old People were unlawfully removed from burials grounds, hospitals and morgues to be sent to museums, universities and private collections in Australia and overseas. The Committee is aware of documented evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were targeted and subsequently murdered for their remains. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, Old People were collected by pastoralists, ethnologists and anthropologists for the purposes of scientific research linked to explaining human biological difference. Later, archaeologists also became interested in researching Old People to explain past human occupation and subsistence within Australia.

Although most overseas institutions would argue that there is scientific value in researching the Old People, little if any research has actually been undertaken in all the time the Old People have been held in their collections, in some cases for more than 100 years. What little research was undertaken was done without the permission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their results have not been made available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is because Old People were seen as objects for research with no relationship to any living Indigenous population.

The return of Old People is a common concern for many Indigenous populations. The Indigenous populations of New Zealand, the United States of America and Canada have also sought or are seeking the return of the remains of their Old People.

From the mid 1960s to the 1980s Indigenous community organisations such as the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre began an intensive campaign to return their Old People, burial objects and significant cultural property from holdings in institutions in Australia and overseas. During the 1980s to the present, Australian museums have been returning Old People to communities of origin, with assistance from Federal, State and Territory Governments.

In the 1990s the Australian Government began funding the repatriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Old People from overseas back to Australia. Funding was first provided through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), followed by its successors, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination and now, through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

In 1998 the Australian Cultural Ministers Council, a council comprising the Federal, State and Territory Cultural Ministers, endorsed a strategic plan to return Old People and secret sacred objects held in the eight major Australian museums, back to their communities of origin. The resulting *Return of Indigenous Cultural Property Program* is administered by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

The domestic and international repatriation programs are separate programs, managed independently by two different federal departments.

The International Repatriation Program administered by FaHCSIA continues to return Old People from overseas. While the program is not aimed at returning objects or other cultural property, there is capacity for the return of such material if overseas institutions offer to return them.

A key aim of the Australian Government's International Repatriation Program is to:

“Promote healing and reconciliation through the return of Indigenous ancestors to their traditional lands or communities of origin”.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the return of Old People back to country is the first step towards restoring their dignity. It restores their rightful place as Elders, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunties, brothers and sisters. It acknowledges the wrong done to them and allows them to finally rest in peace in their homelands. It recognises the unbreakable bond, customary obligations and traditional practices between the living, the land and the dead.

3. Current International Repatriation Process

FaHCSIA administers the international repatriation process which involves identifying Old People held in institutions overseas, negotiating their return with these institutions as instructed by communities (if known) and organising the return of those Old People.

It must be noted that under Australian and English common law, that is, the law as decided by judges, there is no property in human remains. That is, no one can own anybody else's human remains. However, collecting institutions have managed to amass collections of Old People by classing them as objects or relics rather than human remains. This was common practice in earlier times and some countries and institutions still hold the view that Old People are objects with no relationship to current Indigenous peoples. Some overseas governments and many overseas collecting institutions have enacted legislation and/or policies that prohibit the return of any part of their collection.

Therefore, the return of Old People from overseas is dependent on the development of goodwill between Traditional Owners, Australian and overseas governments and overseas institutions. In most cases it also involves educating overseas governments and institutions on the cultural significance of repatriation.

The repatriation of Old People from overseas occurs in different ways. For the most part, collection information must be actively sought from individual institutions. Occasionally, overseas governments and/or institutions have contacted FaHCSIA or the Australian Embassy/High Commission offering to return Old People.

Where the Old People's country is identified, FaHCSIA informs and consults with Traditional Owners. FaHCSIA negotiates and enters into agreements with overseas institutions on behalf of the Traditional Owners and coordinates repatriation processes through ongoing liaison with Traditional Owners, overseas governments and institutions and Australian Embassies/High Commissions. In accordance with its

policy and guidelines, FaHCSIA arranges overseas travel for community representatives and arranges clearance of materials for ceremony, for example, ochre, leaves, wood etc. FaHCSIA organises specialised freight services for the Old People to travel back to Australia (including preparation of packing crates, customs clearance and international transport).

On their return to Australia, the Old People are returned to country. If their country is not known, they are held at the National Museum of Australia (NMA) in Canberra. The NMA also holds Old People, on behalf of Traditional Owners who are unable to take them home. For example, many communities have no suitable land for burial/reburial or no appropriate storage facilities or no community agreement to take immediate custody of their Old People. None of the Old People returned from overseas are entered into the NMA's own collection.

Occasionally, non-destructive analysis of the Old People held in the NMA is undertaken. Old People are assessed to ensure that all remains are re-articulated, or separated into individuals wherever possible, or measured to try to identify the Old People's country or region of origin.

FaHCSIA provides funding to recipient communities for support services, for example, community meetings, travel, accommodation, reburial and associated ceremonial costs. However, funding is limited and dependent on individual community needs.

4. Principles for the repatriation of Old People from Overseas

On 3 April 2009, the Australian Government formally announced support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration contains general principles which are a useful guide to the repatriation process. Of particular relevance is Article 12 which states that:

“Indigenous peoples have the right to the repatriation of their human remains”.

It is desirable for the International Repatriation Program to be guided by agreed principles to ensure that decisions made under it are soundly based, consistent and inclusive of Indigenous aspirations. Some suggested principles are set out below:

(a) Cultural Protocols

- Indigenous people have a responsibility to their Old Peoples to bring them back to country.
- Governments and collecting institutions should support the repatriation of Old People, in which Indigenous people have a pre-eminent role.
- The unconditional return of all Old People and grave goods should be sought.
- Traditional Owners should have access and copies to all relevant documentation concerning their Old People.
- Old People should be returned expeditiously in accordance with the wishes of Traditional Owners.
- Old People should be treated with respect and dignity at all times by all involved.

(b) Community Consultation

- Traditional Owners are the rightful custodians of their Old People and should be consulted prior to any remains being returned.
- Traditional Owners should determine when and how repatriation should be undertaken.
- Traditional Owners or their nominees should travel overseas to take custody of their Old People and accompany them home wherever possible.
- There should be protection for burial or reburial sites.
- There should be a coordinated approach between all levels of government.

(c) Research

- Outcomes of any agreed research should be made available to the relevant community/ies through ‘plain English’ reports or in any other form as requested by the community.
- No scientific research should be undertaken on any Old People from identified country without prior consultation being sought from the Traditional Owners.
- A ‘plain English’ statement outlining what the research will involve should be provided to Traditional Owners in order for them to make a decision.
- Where Old People are from unidentified country, advice on scientific research should be sought from an Indigenous controlled entity such as the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples.

Question 1: Are these principles sound, reasonable, workable and useful? Are there more appropriate principles that should govern international repatriation? If so, what are they?

As stated earlier, in this paper the Committee refers to ancestral remains as Old People, in part as a mark of respect and in part to raise awareness that the remains are first and foremost real people, they are family.

Question 2 – Is the term Old People an appropriate term to use to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remains? If not, what other term or terms should be used?

5. Approach to International Repatriation

The process for the return of Old People from overseas is currently managed through a *Government to Government to Community* model. That is, the Australian Government works directly with overseas governments, through the network of Australian Embassies and High Commissions, with and on behalf of Traditional Owners, to seek and obtain details of any Old People held within their national

collections and requesting their unconditional return. This approach was endorsed by ATSIC's Board of Commissioners at its meeting of March 2003. The ATSIC Board considered that such a model would ensure collections of Old People were returned in a timely and cost effective manner.

The *Government to Government to Community* model means that Traditional Owners are included throughout the process. Traditional Owners are fundamental to any repatriation. Traditional Owners determine if Old People are to be returned to country, when and how. Where possible Traditional Owners also travel overseas to take custody of their Old People and accompany them home. The model also means greater accessibility to Australian Embassies and High Commissions to assist in bringing Old People home.

Utilising this model has seen an increasing number of countries and institutions contacted as well as an increasing number of returns of Old People. For example, returns of Old People have occurred every year since the assumption by the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination and then FaHCSIA of responsibility for the International Repatriation program in 2004. Approximately 250 **ancestors** have been returned between 2004 and 2010 and there is currently negotiation for the return of a further 1,000 Old People's remains held in 48 institutions in 15 countries.

Before the *Government to Government to Community* model, an *Indigenous controlled entity* was funded by government through ATSIC, to undertake international repatriation activities. The *Indigenous controlled entity* model saw the whole process of repatriation from negotiation to the return of Old People managed by Indigenous peoples (in accordance with Indigenous protocols).

Under this model between 1990 and 2004 approximately 1,000 Old Peoples **remains** were returned to their communities of origin, wherever possible. It included the historic repatriation of over 900 remains in a single return from the Edinburgh University, Scotland. This was historic because it was the first major return of Old People from overseas and the largest return to date.

Where the term 'ancestors' has been used above, it is used to describe remains belonging to a single person. Where the term 'remains' is used, it is used to describe a number of remains that could belong to an unidentified number of individuals. Most of the Old People's remains held overseas are not complete ancestors. That is, in the majority of cases, only crania (heads) were taken as these were considered the most valuable for scientific research.

In New Zealand, the only other known country with an established International Repatriation Program, a *Government to Government to Community* model has also been established. The Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa has been mandated to undertake the repatriation of Maori Old People from overseas.

This review is considering which approach would be more inclusive of Indigenous aspirations. Some options for more Indigenous involvement include, using existing Indigenous advisory bodies to maximise existing resources; outsourcing the program or parts of the program to a new or existing Indigenous controlled entity; increasing

Indigenous staff administering the International Repatriation Program; and the establishment of an Indigenous advisory body.

Any changes to the existing program, including the development of a new Indigenous controlled entity would need to be developed using existing resources.

Question 3: What is the most appropriate model for the repatriation program to adequately address community needs for repatriation?

Question 4: What options are there for increasing Indigenous involvement in the repatriation of Old People with no identified country?

Question 5: If there is to be a new Indigenous controlled entity or authority to manage all or parts of the International Repatriation Program, how would it be structured?

6. Overseas Holdings of Old People

FaHCSIA has established a database of the numbers of Old People held in overseas collections. The database is based on information provided directly from overseas governments and institutions. At this time, approximately 1,000 remains of Old People are known to be held in overseas collections. Of these over 600 remains of Old People are held in institutions in the United Kingdom (UK) and as a large amount of research has been undertaken on the collections in that country, the number is considered to be reasonably accurate. For other countries, such as the United States of America, France and Germany, collection information at this time is quite limited. The data currently available indicates that the majority of the Old People held overseas have no known identified country.

As the UK has historical links to Australia it is expected that its institutions would hold the largest collections of Old People, with other countries unlikely to hold large numbers Old People if any at all. Therefore, while there are some people who believe that thousands or tens of thousands of Old People are held overseas, there is no current evidence to support this belief. However, any evidence to the contrary would be taken into consideration.

In many cases overseas institutions also hold original documentation relating to the Old People, for example, registers outlining who collected the Old People and when and how they came into the collection, letters, diaries and medical, coronial or archaeological reports. It should be noted that in other cases collection

documentation is non-existent and often lacks important detail, for example, the exact location that Old People were taken from.

Because of the different government structures in each country, FaHCSIA, in conjunction with the relevant Embassy or High Commission, has used different approaches to collecting information for sharing with communities. In some cases, the overseas government will offer to provide collection information, through its department of culture or arts. In some cases, it is necessary to approach an individual institution directly. It is also sometimes necessary to engage a local expert archivist or researcher to do this work, particularly in countries where English is not spoken.

In considering how this collection of information could be more inclusive of Indigenous aspirations it has been suggested that Indigenous researchers could be used in overseas countries. While this would be an excellent opportunity for Indigenous researchers, particularly Indigenous students or graduates, the opportunity could be somewhat limited by language barriers. Future work in countries such as the United States of America and Canada may present more opportunities for Indigenous researchers. It should also be noted that some communities would prefer that the best and most readily available researchers be engaged rather than seeking an Indigenous researcher.

The approach taken by the New Zealand Government is similar to that taken by Australia, in that it works through its diplomatic channels to approach overseas governments and institutions for collection information.

Question 6: What is the best way to engage Indigenous researchers in the examination of collection information and archival material held overseas?

7. Indigenous Cultural Property

The current policy for the International Repatriation Program does not seek the return of cultural property. It does however, allow for the return of cultural property should a collecting institution make such an offer.

Indigenous cultural property can be divided into four categories:

1. grave goods associated with Old People;
2. secret sacred objects;
3. ceremonial objects; and
4. secular objects such as boomerangs, shields, spears etc. These objects were used, and continue to be used, in daily life.

Under article 12 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it also states that:

“States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, with respect to their

cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs”.

It has not yet been proven what quantity of cultural property held overseas has been legally or illegally acquired. Collecting institutions generally acquire their collections through purchase or donation. It is extremely difficult to determine if any Indigenous cultural property made its way into a collection either in Australia or overseas, without the permission of the owner or maker.

Many collecting institutions argue that secular objects, because they were largely made to be used in daily life, do not have the same cultural significance of other cultural property such as grave goods, secret sacred and/or ceremonial objects and therefore should not be considered for return. This philosophy does not recognise that such objects, because of their age and rarity, may be of great significance to Indigenous peoples, nor does it recognise that many Indigenous peoples have a spiritual connection to their cultural property regardless of its nature or age. It should also be noted that some cultural property considered secular from a museum perspective such as a boomerang or clap sticks, could also be ceremonial or used in ceremonies.

While the current International Repatriation Program can accept any cultural property on offer from an overseas institution, it does not actively seek the return of any cultural property from overseas, because it is focussed on the return of Old People. There are views within the Indigenous community that all cultural property, particularly those associated with Old People, for example, grave goods, should be included in the repatriation process.

The return of cultural property is a contentious issue for collecting institutions around the world, including Australia, and this may adversely impact on an institution’s willingness to return Old People. As a result, a negotiation about cultural property in addition to Old People may prevent a successful repatriation outcome. Many overseas institutions have national or state legislation or policies that prevent the return of any cultural property. For this reason, institutions that have returned Old People have done so by amending legislation to return ‘human remains’ which are seen as separate from other cultural property.

Question 7: Should the International Repatriation Program include a policy on the return of cultural property and if so, what should it cover?

8. Long-term care and management of Old People who cannot be returned to country

A significant number of Old People are from unidentified country, that is, there is no information on the exact place where the Old People were taken from. There is often only vague location information such as ‘Australia’ or sometimes a state/territory or region such as ‘Queensland’ or the ‘Torres Strait’. Wherever possible, Old People from identified country are returned to their community of origin.

The National Museum of Australia is engaged by FaHCSIA to provide storage for Old People returned from overseas that cannot be returned to country.

There is a view that collecting institutions should have an Indigenous reference or advisory committee, to act as next-of-kin for those Old People who cannot be returned to country, and to oversee their care and management. Another suggestion is for an Indigenous controlled entity to undertake this role of 'next-of-kin'. There is also a view that the new Congress of Australia's First Peoples (previously known as the National Representative Body) could undertake this role.

All major state museums hold collections of Old People from unidentified country. Most of these institutions do so under advice from their own Indigenous advisory committee.

The most appropriate place to keep Old People who cannot or probably will not be returned to country (because their country of origin will never be known) is a difficult issue. Establishing a national keeping place for Old People from unidentified country has been discussed for many years. There has also been discussion regarding establishing regional keeping places for Old People identified as coming from a specific region, for example, the Kimberley or the Torres Strait. This option could only be realistically viable if there were large numbers of Old People from the region.

There is a view that establishing a national keeping place could give a national focus to Old People with no known country and would also provide a culturally appropriate facility to hold Old People whose country cannot be identified. However, there are concerns that a national keeping place would be just another museum and that choosing a site for a national keeping place would be problematic. There is also a question of the cost involved.

It has been suggested that a national or regional burial sites, with full site protection would be appropriate. There is a view that burying or reburying Old People with no known country means that they are at least back in the ground if not in their own country. There are, however, major concerns regarding the cultural appropriateness of burying Old People in someone else's country.

There is a view that where Old People are at least identified as being from a specific state or territory, that they be sent to the relevant state or territory museum for safe keeping in the short term. Some community groups may not favour this approach, which simply returns Old People from one museum to another. Some alternative places for safe keeping might include knowledge centres, where they exist, or local community organisations such as land councils.

Question 8: What is the most appropriate way for Indigenous aspirations to be included in relation to overseeing the care and management of Old People with no known country?

Question 9. If the “next-of-kin” concept is appropriate, which existing Indigenous controlled entity could perform this role? If there is no existing Indigenous controlled entity to perform this role, what might a new Indigenous controlled entity look like?

Question 10: Is a national keeping place or burial site an acceptable response to caring for Old People with no known country? If so, where might a national keeping or burial place be located?

Question 11: Should Old People who are identified only as coming from a specific state or territory be returned to that state or territory museum? What other alternatives are there?

9. Allocation of Funding

The International Repatriation Program has funds available for:

- community consultation
- community travel (accommodation and travel allowance) both domestic and international
- reburial costs (catering, community travel, equipment hire etc)
- freighting of Old People from overseas
- compiling inventories of Old People held overseas
- provenancing of Old People either through archival research or non-destructive methods
- storage of Old People (including provenancing, community reports, re-articulation, community support etc).

The program does not fund:

- keeping places (either their establishment or maintenance)
- purchase of land
- on-going site management and protection
- salaries for community workers.

Overseas travel

A key issue for Traditional Owners is being able to travel overseas to take custody of their Old People, undertake any ceremonial activities, such as smoking ceremonies, and accompany them home. Wherever possible, FaHCSIA’s policy has been to fund travel, accommodation and travel allowance for two Traditional Owners. Traditional Owners travelling overseas generally fly business class. This recognises the long flights and the short time actually spent overseas. For example, a single repatriation

from Europe is normally undertaken within 7 days, including travel time. Overseas travel is based on the same entitlements as for Australian Government employees.

However, the high cost of overseas travel and the transportation of Old People means that the program budget cannot sustain Traditional Owners travelling in every repatriation particularly when there are very small numbers to be repatriated e.g. Old People are often fragmentary, sometimes consisting of a single bone.

In cases where there are a small number of Old People to be returned, it has been suggested that Traditional Owners also undertake an advocacy role to persuade other institutions/countries to return Old People.

Community funding

The program also funds return to country ceremonies. These ceremonies occur once Old People are ready for burial/reburial. The budget for such ceremonies can be extremely high, particularly in remote areas. Given the limited funding available there is a need for a set of guidelines to enable each community to be supported appropriately. It has been suggested that funding be negotiated with individual communities on a case by case basis, or to cap the amount for ceremonies, depending on the available funding. As a minimum, it has been suggested that payment of costs for Traditional Owners and the community such as accommodation, meals and fuel would be essential.

Question 12: In what circumstances should traditional owners travel overseas and what guidelines should govern the numbers who travel?

Question 13: What is an equitable basis for an amount of community funding for return to country ceremonies?

10. Modified Old People

In earlier times some Indigenous communities traditionally modified the remains of Old People so that they were no longer viewed as Old People but as an object to be used. For example, some communities used the crania (heads) to make water vessels, while other communities used remains to make sacred ceremonial objects. It is important to note that these 'modifications' were made by Indigenous peoples themselves. The view by many museums in Australia and overseas, is that these modified remains are objects and are therefore, not subject to the same repatriation policies as remains.

This can lead to some anomalies. For example, collecting institutions and even some Indigenous communities, consider items made of human hair such as paint brushes or string to be objects, while hair samples collected for research purposes, are classed as human remains and are subject to the same repatriation processes as other Old People.

FaHCSIA's current position is that it is not the role of museums or governments to determine what constitutes Old People. This is a decision for Traditional Owners. While FaHCSIA always seeks to consult with Traditional Owners where known, where modified remains have no known country some guidance is needed about the most appropriate approach.

Question 14: What is your view on seeking the repatriation of modified remains of Old People with no identified country?

11. Burial/reburial of Old People

The burial or reburial of Old People is a big responsibility for Traditional Owners and Elders, with enormous pressure to ensure that Old People are returned to country in a dignified and culturally appropriate manner. Added to this responsibility is often a lack of resources and appropriate land for burial or reburial.

The lack of appropriate land is a major problem for a large number of communities, particularly if there are a large number of Old People to be buried or reburied. For some communities this means negotiating with Federal, State/Territory, Local Governments and private land owners.

There is a view that the repatriation process needs a holistic approach. From the community perspective there is a need for a seamless approach, from returning from overseas to burying or reburying their Old People. Their spirit does not rest until they are returned to country and often this last step can be the most difficult for the community to undertake. Access to land, for burial or reburial and site protection are issues that involve State and Local Governments. At present there is no coordinated approach between governments, organisations and communities.

Question 15: What can be done to support communities locally to harness their resources?

Question 16: What role should each level of government (Federal, State/Territory, Local) play in supporting communities to finalise the return to country?

12. Providing feedback

Thank you for your interest in this discussion paper. The Committee is inviting feedback from Indigenous individuals/organisations/peak bodies, state-wide heritage committees and major museums. Based on this feedback a position paper will then be provided by the Committee to Government.

Any queries or responses to the discussion paper can be directed by email to: international.repatriation@fahcsia.gov.au or by contacting:

International Repatriation Advisory Committee Secretariat
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WODEN ACT 2606

Telephone: (02) 6121 4911
Fax: (02) 6121 4150

All responses will remain confidential and will be used only by the Committee for the purposes of preparing advice to the Australian Government.

Appendix 1

International Repatriation Advisory Committee

In July 2009, applications were sought from interested persons for membership of a Ministerially-appointed International Repatriation Advisory Committee (Committee). In October 2009, 8 members were appointed on the recommendations of an Indigenous selection panel to assess the applications.

The formation of the Committee came about after reviewing recommendations from an International Repatriation Workshop held by FaHCSIA on 22 October 2008 and a national workshop held by the Centre for Indigenous Cultural Policy (CICP) on 11-12 November 2008. The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin has asked for greater Indigenous participation in developing international repatriation policy and processes that are relevant to the needs of Indigenous communities from where the remains had originated.

The Committee members are:

Mr Phillip Gordon (Co-Chair) – Mr Gordon is currently the Acting Manager of the Aboriginal Heritage Unit at the Australian Museum, Sydney. Mr Gordon has been employed at the Museum for over 25 years. During this time he has repatriated remains to communities throughout Australia. He was a key member of the team that reviewed the Museums Australia's national policy on Museums and Indigenous peoples. Mr Gordon has presented numerous papers on repatriation nationally and internationally and has numerous publications on the issue.

Mrs Chrissy Grant (Co-Chair) – Mrs Grant was previously the Director, Indigenous Heritage Assessment Section with the Australian Heritage Commission and the Dept of the Environment and Heritage. She has extensive experience in writing and reviewing policies affecting Indigenous peoples. She is currently Chair of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Research Ethics Committee, a member of the Indigenous Advisory Committee to the Dept of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and a member of the Australian National Committee for UNESCO.

Prof Henry Atkinson – Prof Atkinson is an Elder of the Yorta Yorta tribe of Victoria. He has extensive repatriation experience and has travelled overseas several times to repatriate Indigenous ancestral remains. Prof Atkinson was a member of the Department's previous Repatriation Committee. Prof Atkinson recently received his honorary professorship from Monash University in 2009.

Mr Bob Weatherall – Mr Weatherall is currently the Chairman of the Centre for Indigenous Cultural Policy, Brisbane. Mr Weatherall possesses over 20 years' repatriation experience. He has significant cultural knowledge and is known in Indigenous communities throughout the country particularly for his work in

repatriation. He has tirelessly promoted repatriation to decision-makers both overseas and in Australia over many years.

Mr Neil Carter – Mr Carter is currently the Repatriation Officer for the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre. He has an excellent understanding of the issues relating to international repatriation particularly as they relate to remote communities. Mr Carter was responsible for community consultation across the Kimberley on the repatriation of their ancestral remains from Sweden and is currently heavily involved in the repatriation of their ancestral remains from Austria.

Ms Jeanette Crew – Ms Crew is a NSW Government employee and has an excellent understanding of government process and policies surrounding repatriation. Ms Crew is a member of the Mutti Mutti community whose area includes Lake Mungo. The Mutti Mutti people were amongst the first communities to deal with repatriation, when their ancient remains (60,000+ years) were returned to country.

Ms Olivia Robinson – Ms Robinson is currently a Senior Research Officer, Heritage Collections, State Library of Queensland. Ms Robinson was previously the Senior Curator at the Queensland Museum where she managed the national repatriation program. Ms Robinson was a recipient of the 2008 Queensland-Smithsonian Fellowship which enabled her to research innovative Indigenous engagement strategies at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Ms Robinson was a member of the Department's previous Repatriation Reference Committee.

Mr Chris Wilson – Mr Wilson is a Ngarrindjeri man who has an excellent understanding of repatriation issues. He has worked with his Elders to return his ancestral remains to country and has been involved in the repatriation process from negotiation to reburial. In 2008 Mr Wilson travelled to the UK to accompany his ancestral remains home. Mr Wilson possesses a Bachelor of Archaeology (First Class Honours) which was based around repatriation and reburial of Ngarrindjeri Old People and is currently undertaking his PhD at Flinders University.