

The Tamaki Makau-rau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Objects

Proposed in November, 2005 at WAC Inter-Congress, Auckland, New Zealand. Adopted by WAC Council in January, 2006, WAC Inter-Congress, Osaka, Japan

In recognition of the principles adopted by the Vermillion Accord, the display of human remains and sacred objects is recognised as a sensitive issue.

Human remains include any organic remains and associated material. Sacred objects are those that are of special significance to a community. Display means the presentation in any media or form of human remains and sacred objects, whether on a single occasion or on an ongoing basis, including conference presentations or publications. Community may include, but is not limited to, ethnic, racial, religious, traditional or Indigenous groups of people.

WAC reiterates its commitment to scientific principles governing the study of the human past. We agree that the display of human remains or sacred objects may serve to illuminate our common humanity. As archaeologists, we believe that good science is guided by ethical principles and that our work must involve consultation and collaboration with communities. The members of the WAC council agree to assist with making contacts within the affected communities.

Any person(s) or organisation considering displaying such material or already doing so should take account of the following principles:

1. Permission should be obtained from the affected community or communities.
2. Should permission be refused that decision is final and should be respected.
3. Should permission be granted, any conditions to which that permission is subject should be complied with in full.
4. All display should be culturally appropriate.
5. Permission can be withdrawn or amended at any stage and such decisions should be respected.
6. Regular consultation with the affected community should ensure that the display remains culturally appropriate