

**MUSEUM OF NEW
ZEALAND
TE PAPA
TONGAREWA**

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22 January 2021

Tēnā koe,

Re: Official Information Act (OIA) Request – Banks Peninsula Turtle (Part 2)

I am writing in response to your email dated 3 December 2020 and in which you requested the following information:

- 1. The late turtle was your guest for almost 10 months. Why was no scientific research undertaken on it?*
- 2. Is there still a legal requirement that certain deceased turtles be sent to a museum?*
- 3. If so, what is the legislation, and why was Te Papa chosen rather than a closer South Island museum?*
- 4. Please supply a photo of the turtle crate/coffin.*
- 5. Please supply details of the company who built the turtle crate/coffin.*
- 6. How many staff members attended the powhiri for the deceased turtle, and for how long?*
- 7. What is the estimated total staff cost for the attendees at said powhiri?*
- 8. Which members of the senior management team attended (including the CEO)?*
- 9. Who spoke at the powhiri?*
- 10. Please supply all speech notes and all recordings of the speeches.*
- 11. Were any of the speakers not staff members of Te Papa?*
- 12. Was the turtle being welcomed to the museum or the marae?*

We address each of your questions as follows:

1. The late turtle was your guest for almost 10 months. Why was no scientific research undertaken on it?

Te Papa quickly became aware that the honu (turtle) was significant to the Koukourāata Rūnaka and that support for the turtle to remain at Te Papa was unlikely from the rūnaka. It was decided that no research be conducted out of respect of this situation and without appropriate consent from the rūnaka. To enable scientific research to be undertaken, the turtle would have had to be skeletonised (i.e. processes undertaken to reduce the turtle remains to a skeleton). In conjunction with tikanga, it is usually important that all parts of the taonga or specimen (in this case, the turtle) should be buried, if possible.

2. Is there still a legal requirement that certain deceased turtles be sent to a museum?

Marine turtles in New Zealand are fully protected under the Wildlife Act 1953, which is administered by the Department of Conservation. There is no legal requirement that deceased protected species be sent to museums. Te Papa is authorised by DOC to retain specimens of protected species, and is often contacted by DOC to determine our interest in notable specimens.

Some regional museums have similar authorisation, and DOC staff often contact more than one museum to see if any are interested in a particular specimen. Where more than one museum

expresses interest, the decision on where a specimen ends up is made by DOC, although the larger museums often work collegially and make recommendations on where a specimen should go. Processing large decaying corpses (e.g. of marine mammals and turtles) is messy, dangerous and expensive. Few museums have the resources to do this, and their interest in a particular specimen is governed by many factors, including current research programmes, existing holdings, and capacity/resources to process, preserve and store large specimens.

3. If so, what is the legislation, and why was Te Papa chosen rather a closer South Island museum? Refer answer to question 2.

4. Please supply a photo of the turtle crate/coffin
See attached.

5. Please supply details of the company who built the turtle crate/coffin.
Te Papa staff built the crate/coffin.

6. How many staff members attended the powhiri for the deceased turtle, and for how long?
Seven staff members and one board member attended the pōwhiri for the honu at Koukourārata. The delegation stayed in Christchurch for one night due to the early start time of the pōwhiri.

7. What is the estimated total staff cost for the attendees at said powhiri?
Domestic travel, car rental and accommodation (8pax) - \$4,327.77

8. Which members of the senior management team attended (including the CEO)?
Te Papa representatives at the pōwhiri for the honu at Koukourārata:
Te Papa Board - James Daniels
Te Papa Executive Leadership Team - Dr Arapata Hakiwai, Kaihautū; Dean Peterson, Director of Collections and Research and Carolyn Roberts-Thompson, Director Ngā Manu Atarau
Te Papa Management - Phil Edgar, Head of Natural History; Te Herekiele Herewini, Head of Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation; Migoto Eria, Head of Mātauranga Māori
Te Papa staff - Alan Tennyson, Curator Vertebrates

9. Who spoke at the powhiri?
The Kaihautū Dr Arapata Hakiwai and Head of Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation, Te Herekiele Herewini, spoke at the pōwhiri where the Honu was handed back to the iwi.

10. Please supply all speech notes and all recordings of the speeches.
No speech notes were written for the pōwhiri and Te Papa did not make recordings of the speeches.

11. Were any of the speakers not staff members of Te Papa?
No, the other speakers involved in the handover pōwhiri were iwi representatives.

12. Was the turtle being welcomed to the museum or the marae?
Due to the weight of the turtle presenting significant restrictions on movement, the turtle was welcomed onto a paddock near to the Marae and its final resting place.

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us please contact either Frances Lawrence or Zoë Genet, at OIA@tepapa.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Frances Lawrence
Senior Advisor Planning and Performance



Zoë Genet
Principal Legal Counsel