



KAURNA NATION STATEMENT REPATRIATION OF KAURNA OLD PERSON

Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden
Thursday 23 August 2018

Kaurna Country

- The Kaurna are the first people of Adelaide and the Adelaide Plains, whose country stretches from the Light River in the north, extending easterly from the Gulf St Vincent to the Mount Lofty Ranges and south along the Onkaparinga River to just north of the Myponga River in South Australia.
- The area now occupied by the city of Adelaide and parklands – called by the Kaurna *Tarntanya* (red kangaroo place) – was the heart of Kaurna country.
- In March 2018, the Kaurna People were officially recognised as the traditional land owners of the Adelaide Plains and surrounding area under the Australian Government's *Native Title Act 1993*. It marks the first time that Native Title has been determined over an Australian Capital City.

Kaurna People

- For many years the ancestral remains of Kaurna Old People and neighbouring Nations were collected by museums and universities across Australia and the world for the purpose of 'scientific' research.
- The Old People were often taken without consent which caused great sadness and anger which has been carried for generations. While past wrongs cannot be forgotten, pathways to healing can now start.
- The return of the Kaurna Old Person from the Karolinska Institute has taken some time as the community needed time to decide how their Old People would be laid to rest.
- The Kaurna want to bring the Old People home to where their spirits lie. These spirits resonate into past generations and future generations.
- Bringing them home becomes the mechanism by which the Kaurna People can deal with this within themselves and for themselves.
- The Kaurna traditional custodians have been tirelessly working to return the remains of their Old People to Country.
- The processes and practices of repatriation and reburial are important for the cultural learning of young Kaurna People and non-Aboriginal people.

- The return of the Old People to Country starts a journey of healing and a shared active approach of addressing the significance of repatriation so that policies can be supported with resources.

Final Resting

- When the Kurna Old Person comes back to Australia the traditional custodians will travel to Canberra where they will meet their ancestor and perform a traditional ceremony.
- They will also receive another Kurna Old Person who was returned from the Natural History Museum in Austria some years earlier under the Australian Government's Indigenous Repatriation Program.
- Traditional custodians Jeffrey Newchurch and Tim Williams will escort these Old People from Canberra to Adelaide where the Australian Government stewards will officially hand over the Old People to Kurna on their traditional Country at Tennyson Dunes.
- The dune system at Tennyson is culturally significant to the Kurna People. The wetlands provided significant bush food as well as fish, crabs and cockles.
- The dune systems were also commonly used as burial grounds so it is fitting to return the Old People back to their Country and give them a ceremonial resting place.
- Kurna Elder and Traditional Owner, Jeffrey Newchurch commented "it is humbling to be able to lay to rest these Kurna Old People to Country".

The Future

- The Kurna People know that institutions overseas and in Australia still hold hundreds of their ancestors' remains. This is disrespectful and wrong. Their hope is that the repatriation of their Old People will continue strongly in the future.
- Kurna Elder and Traditional Owner, Jeffrey Newchurch has stated "I have been working for many years on the return of Kurna Old People, and one day I hope all ancestral remains of the Kurna Old People will be returned to Country".

Acknowledgements

- The Kurna People thank the Australian Government for its support through the Indigenous Repatriation Program and for their assistance in returning the Kurna Old People home to Country.
- The Kurna People thank the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board, the South Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, the South Australian Department for Environment and Water, the City of Charles Sturt, City of Port Adelaide Enfield, the Tennyson Dunes Working Group and the Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts, Museums and Repatriation team.
- The Kurna People acknowledge the Karolinska Institute and the Swedish Government for recognising that Australia's Indigenous Peoples have the right to repatriate their ancestor's remains.

The Kurna People, Adelaide, South Australia
14 August 2018