

Response from Maui Solomon, Hokotehi Moriori Trust, to Dr Bolton

From: Maui Solomon [mailto:maui.solomon@paradise.net.nz]
Sent: Monday, 10 September 2007 10:50 a.m.
To: 'Lissant Bolton'
Subject: RE: Visit

Tena koe Dr Bolton,

Thanks for getting in touch. Unfortunately, I am going to be away on Friday 14 Sept as I'm heading down to Chatham Islands on that day.

However, I am very familiar with the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation programme run by Te Papa and have been actively involved over a number of years in working with Te Papa and other institutions around the repatriation of Moriori koimi (human remains) from overseas museums to Te Papa in readiness for their return journey back to Rekohu (Chatham Islands). In fact, we are currently organising a return of some 13 koimi to Pitt Island later this year. The Karanga team have been very helpful to us in our efforts to repatriate our ancestral remains back home where they belong.

I would be very interested to know if the British Museum has Moriori koimi amongst its collections. About half of the collection of koimi held by NZ museums are provenanced to Moriori and many help by overseas museums.

I hope that you can meet with the Karanga team. I'm sure you will find them very professional and easy to deal with.

Me rongo (in peace),

Maui Solomon
Vice-Chair
Hokotehi Moriori Trust

From: Lissant Bolton [mailto:LBOLTON@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 September 2007 6:12 a.m.
To: maui.solomon@paradise.net.nz
Subject: Visit

Dear Maui Solomon,
Professor David Williams from the University of Auckland suggested that I contact you. If I may first introduce myself, my name is Lissant Bolton and I work at the British Museum with the Oceanic collections. I am an Australian, and as an anthropologist have worked for many years at the invitation of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre in programmes to document and revive women's cultural knowledge in Vanuatu.

As you may know, Karanga Aotearoa, the Repatriation Unit at Te Papa Tongarewa, have asked the British Museum to return all Maori human remains to Te Papa. As you may also know, last year the British Museum returned human remains from Tasmania to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. The Trustees of the British Museum take these requests very seriously, and ask to be very thoroughly informed of all the different aspects of each case. They commissioned a number of reports on the claim from Te Papa, but not all of them were submitted. In the light of that, they have now asked me to visit New Zealand to talk to a range of different Maori, including Te Papa, other museums, iwi representatives and other groupings and individuals, to provide them with a sense of the range of Maori opinion on this issue. The British Museum policy on the return of human remains is published on the Museum's website at

http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/the_museum/news_and_debate/debate/human_remains.aspx

David has suggested that while I am in Wellington I might meet with you to discuss this issue.

I have been planning this visit for sometime and his suggestion, made recently, means that I am making this request to you very late in the day. I will be in Wellington, where I gather you are, on Friday September 14th -- next week in fact. I appreciate that at this short notice a meeting may not be possible. I hope to meet with Karanga Aotearoa staff in the morning on that day.

I do apologise for the lateness of this request,

with many thanks

Lissant Bolton

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