



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

CHAU CHAK WING  
MUSEUM

# Guidelines

FOR ANCIENT HUMAN REMAINS  
(NICHOLSON COLLECTION)

Version 1

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# Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Sydney acknowledges the First Nations peoples of Australia as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, live and create.

The University's Camperdown campus sits on the lands of the Gadigal people, with campuses, teaching and research facilities on the lands of the Gamaraygal, Dharug, Wangal, Darkinyung, Burramattagal, Dharawal, Gandangara, Gamilaraay, Barkindji, Bundjalung, Wiradjuri, Ngunawal, Gureng Gureng, and Gagadju peoples.

We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities of these lands, past, present and emerging, who for thousands of years have managed, shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations, for the benefit of all.

These Guidelines provide guidance to the University on how to respect ancient human remains cared for by the Nicholson Collection at the Chau Chak Wing Museum located on the Country of First Nations peoples.

# Cultural Safety Notice

This document contains sensitive material and content that may be culturally confronting and upsetting for some readers, including First Nations people. The intention is to safeguard human remains and respect them, and to ensure University staff treat human remains with appropriate care. At times, the language used in this document may be challenging. The University recognises that First Nations people see human remains as ancestral, and as people with connections to spirit, Country and kin today.

Human remains have been held by the University of Sydney for teaching and learning since its origins in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The first human remains came from ancient Egypt and were collected, along with coffins and other burial equipment, to demonstrate ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs and culture. Over time, human remains from other time periods and places were also acquired. This was often by European collectors and travellers, scientists, medical practitioners and archaeologists.

Due to past collecting practices, displaced human remains are a reality of many museums and cultural collections internationally. There were many different underlying motivations for this, largely underpinned by colonial contexts, which spanned teaching purposes, morbid fascination, medical research, eugenics, ethnographic study and scientific study.

## 1.0 Overview

Chau Chak Wing Museum (CCWM) is committed to being at the forefront of ethical practice, and empathetic and open dialogue relating to ancestors from all cultures in its care (see 1.2). CCWM recognises the challenging legacies of collections formed in colonial contexts, which include human remains, and the way in which shifting attitudes and decision making have impacted their treatment, display and interpretation across all platforms over time.

CCWM is developing working guidelines for ancient human remains from the Nicholson Collection informed by recent holistic research findings, and by working closely with descent communities, and our diverse museum audiences. These human remains come from Cyprus, Egypt, France and the site of Jericho (West Bank). This research and consultation is ongoing given the shifting attitudes in this space over time and place. CCWM is developing culturally specific guidelines for the human remains in its care one culture at a time, starting with ancient Egypt. In 2026, guidelines will be published for Cyprus, followed by France and Jericho.

The accrual of the CCWM collections has largely been shaped from a Western lens. This must be acknowledged. CCWM recognises that this framing has often excluded or marginalised the lived experiences, knowledge systems, and values of First Nations and non-Western peoples. To address this, the University is updating its commitment to honouring the dignity and humanity of those in the collection. This includes incorporating culturally respectful practices, recognising the deep significance of human remains, and seeking guidance from cultural custodians to ensure their voices and traditions are upheld.

Where possible, this document focuses on bridging gaps in existing national and international frameworks around ethical guidance (see 2.0), particularly by addressing the care of human remains in specific terms, culture by culture, using clear language.

These working guidelines have been informed by established practices developed around the care and custodianship of Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand First Nations ancestral remains, which are community centred and consultative. The

guidelines are intended to apply to the care of CCWM's Nicholson Collection and associated documentation, interpretation and display, teaching and research, education and public programs, as well as our online platforms, media, marketing, and merchandising.

## 1.1 How to read this document

This document is explicitly written in relation to the human remains in the Nicholson Collection of the Chau Chak Wing Museum. It details the CCWM's overarching approaches to caring for human remains from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East and is complemented by a series of guidelines specific to each culture from where the human remains originate.

Other policies and guidelines referred to throughout this document and to be consulted in unison, include:

- Collections Guidelines (February 2023)  
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/chau-chak-wing/policies-and-guidelines/ccwm-collections-guidelines-2023.pdf>
- Repatriation statement  
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/museum/about-us/policies-and-guidelines.html>

## 1.2 Definitions

**Ancestors:** While ancestors is the preferred term used by the University of Sydney for human remains belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we recognise that not all communities prefer to be identified this way. In this vein, we are led by the community's preferred terms as outlined in each of the culturally specific guidelines referenced above.

**Human remains:** For the purpose of these guidelines, human remains refers to skeletal and mummified remains belonging to once living people, including complete bodies and body parts, and soft tissues such as organs, skin, teeth and hair. The body parts can be co-mingled with other human and animal remains in archaeological assemblages. They can also be adapted and modified for another purpose, i.e. 'artefactual' human remains. The guidelines also address photographs, video, artworks, casts and replicas (physical and virtual) that reproduce human remains and the Museum's documentary practices for managing this collection.

## 1.3 Acknowledgements

This working document, and CCWM's [\*\*Human Remains Research Project\*\*](#) more broadly, is led by CCWM's Human Remains Advisory Group, in close consultation with community stakeholders, and academic specialists. The Advisory Group was established to provide progressive guidance to implementing improved museum practices in this area, in addition to ensuring accountability, and critical reflection of the working guidelines. Invaluable guidance was sought from the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) and CCWM's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.

Internal CCWM members of the Human Remains Advisory Group, include:

- Senior Curator, Nicholson Collection (Chair of the Advisory Group)

- Assistant Curator, Nicholson Collection
- Senior Curator, Macleay Collections
- Curator, Cultural Collection, Macleay Collections
- Indigenous Heritage Curator, Macleay Collections
- Head of Collections Management
- Senior Conservator
- Senior Registration Officer
- Deputy Director
- Head of Public Engagement
- Chair, Accessibility and Inclusion Working Group

In addition to two USYD representatives, including:

- Curator, Shellshear Museum
- Academic staff member, History and Philosophy of Science/Ethics\*

Further local specialists who have provided expert guidance and input into this document include Ali Ibrahim, Conservator (Western Sydney Project), Chau Chak Wing Museum and Human Remains Research Project collaborators: Professor Ronika Power, Bioarchaeologist, Macquarie University, Jacinta Carruthers, Manager, Access and Widening Participation and Sessional Academic in the Department of History and Archaeology, Macquarie University, Dr Aaron de Souza, Honorary Research Fellow, Department of History and Archaeology, Macquarie University, and Alexandra Doubleday, undergraduate student, Macquarie University and CCWM Human Remains Research Project volunteer.

International collaborators include Professor Alice Stevenson and Heba Abd el Gawad of *Egypt's Dispersed Heritage Project*, University College London, and museum evaluation specialist Dr Rafie Cecilia, Kings College London.

A number of interns and volunteers have also been critical in shaping various aspects of this research, in particular: Zara El Mahir (University of Sydney intern and researcher, 2024), Simon Wyatt-Spratt (CCWM education officer and data collector, 2022), and Sabrina Baron (volunteer until late 2023 and data collector).

\* Membership to the Advisory Group by an academic staff member is not specific to a singular discipline or Faculty. Future membership positions may be offered to University academics who have a strong focus on ethics, which intersect with our management and approach to the care of human remains.

## 1.4 Purpose

This working document aims to provide an ethical, responsive, and transparent framework for international human remains in CCWM's care, ensuring that human remains are given appropriate respect on Gadigal land. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Oceanic ancestral remains are cared for separately by the Macleay Collections. Work continues to build relationships for their care and potential return, see: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/museum/about-us/policies-and-guidelines.html>.

Human remains in our care were once living people and are a significant part of our shared global cultural heritage and as such hold a unique status within our collections. At all times, in all cases, human remains are to be engaged and referred to with dignity and respect (in accordance with the Museum's culturally specific guidelines, see e.g. Ancient Egypt).

Further to this, we consider international human remains in their original cultural, temporal and geographical contexts. The culturally specific nature of our guidelines (see 1.1) is intended to recognise the different requirements, conditions and attitudes held by, and towards, human remains from different cultures and time periods, and considers approaches to their care within the context of modern voices, particularly from descent communities.

The guidelines apply to all CCWM staff, affiliates, researchers, students, interns and volunteers. They will be reviewed and revised on a biannual basis by CCWM's Human Remains Advisory Group.

## 1.5 Objectives

The objectives of these guidelines are fourfold:

- (1) To establish culturally specific approaches to the care, custodianship, documentation, interpretation and display, teaching and research, education and public programs (in both physical and online forms), and associated media, including any marketing and merchandising, of international human remains in CCWM's care;
- (2) To be inclusive, collaborative and empathetic with descent communities and different museum publics by using rigorous, ethical research methodologies and consultation to inform decision making;
- (3) To demonstrate CCWM's commitment to being actively engaged with, and responsive to, current ethical debates and discourses surrounding the care, custodianship, interpretation and display of international human remains in the Museum, on Country; and
- (4) To comply with, and be adaptive to evolving local, national and international standards, and laws governing collections of human remains.

## 1.6 Overarching Philosophy

CCWM recognises that attitudes regarding ethical considerations of the custodianship and display of human remains are constantly shifting. The philosophy presented here seeks to demonstrate utmost respect and dignity towards human remains (in accordance with the Museum's culturally specific guidelines) and the many different living communities encountering the human remains in our care.

We aim to provide all CCWM staff, students and researchers with the resources to ensure they are able to undertake their work in an informed and culturally safe manner, and are compliant with all guidelines and policies governing their care.

We aim to prepare, inform and empower different museum publics (online and in person) and to equip them with the tools to make their own decisions regarding their experience in encountering (or not) human remains. We further aim to communicate the complexities of the ongoing discourse on human remains in museum collections by providing a sensitive and thoughtful framework.

## 2.0 Standards

CCWM will continue to comply with, and be adaptive to evolving local, national and international standards surrounding the ethics of engaging with human remains. This includes the International Council of Museum's (ICOM's) Code of Ethics (2004) and the World Archaeological Congress' Vermillion Accord on Human Remains (1989). Since Australia currently does not have a set of national guidelines in place for the care of international human remains, the UK's Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) guidelines (2005) have been consulted as a frame of reference along with the New Zealand Museums Standards Scheme (2007), the [Australian Office of the Arts policy on Indigenous Repatriation](#) (2019), the National Museum of Australia's [A Repatriation Handbook](#) (2020), and AMaGA's Continuous Cultures Policy (2005).

### 2.1 Legal Framework

CCWM will abide by State and Federal law (see the Museum's Collections Guidelines, 2023) regulating the protection of environmental and cultural heritage and international agreements between Australia and other countries.

### 2.2 Code of Conduct

CCWM will abide by international, national and state/territory protocols relating to museum practice, moveable heritage and heritage places and fabric and will act in accordance with the ICOM *Code of Ethics for Museums* (2004), the UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970); the UNESCO CITES Convention (1975); and with the terms of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act* (1984) (Cth) and *Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Act* (2013) (Cth), *Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Regulation* 2014, and the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act* (1986) (Cth).

CCWM staff members will also act in accordance with the standards of the University of Sydney's *Staff And Affiliates Code of Conduct* (2021) and *Delegations of Authority Rule* (2020).

### 2.3 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

CCWM supports the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) (**UNDRIP** or the **Declaration**), including originating communities' rights to "maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expression" (Article 31.1, p. 22). This is also known as **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property**, or **ICIP**. Human remains belonging to Indigenous communities represent the ICIP of those communities. Regarding remains of First Nations people in Australia, CCWM will manage ICIP rights in accordance with legal obligations, and with this policy and the University of Sydney Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property and Indigenous

Data Sovereignty Protocol (the **Protocol**),<sup>1</sup> and in consultation with First Nations descent communities. The Protocol commits the University to respecting UNDRIP (Article 31). Further, the University endeavours to respect UNDRIP regarding the human remains of all indigenous peoples.

Article 31 further includes the right to maintain, control, protect and develop “the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including **human and genetic resources**”. Where indigenous descent communities seek to access, research or develop knowledge based on materials held in CCWM collections, including human remains, samples, DNA and genomes, CCWM will work with those communities to facilitate such requests, and in accordance with their access requirements, wherever possible.

## 2.4 Caring for international human remains on Gadigal land

CCWM’s Human Remains Advisory Group actively collaborates and engages in ongoing conversations with the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) to best care for international human remains on Gadigal land. Further conversations have been held with CCWM’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee. The University is committed to ensuring that the care of all human remains is done respectfully recognising protocols of descent communities, and recognising these requests on Gadigal land.

## 2.5 Community consultation

CCWM is committed to working closely with descent communities, or cultural guardians (e.g. government authorities) where such communities are unknown, as well as different museum publics to shape the way in which we ethically approach international human remains in our care (see 3.0, Culturally Specific Guidelines – Ancient Egypt). The Museum will undertake thorough research to attempt to identify the correct communities or guardians responsible for human remains in its care. In the case where these communities cannot be identified, or easily accessed, we will defer to the relevant institutions and presiding local archaeological authorities for guidance.

## 2.6 Cultural safety notice

CCWM is mindful that our audiences are diverse, and cultural sensitivities may differ. Viewing human remains in collections can be discomforting for visitors, and we seek to ensure that our audiences are informed, and feel culturally and psychologically safe in our spaces.

CCWM displays cultural safety notices where human remains are to be encountered on display (both physically and digitally). These notices are to be placed at entry points, and should be clearly signposted and accessible to visitors prior to entering a space and allow them to make an informed decision about proceeding, or not, into the nominated exhibition area. Cultural safety notices must be appropriately detailed. Such notices may include:

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<sup>1</sup> It is noted that this ICIP and IDSoV Protocol was prepared with a specific focus on Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

- Acknowledgement that the human remains are of people who once lived, rather than treating them as objects or specimens.
- Acknowledgement that the presence of human remains may evoke strong emotional, spiritual or cultural reactions. This is preferred over taking a purely scientific approach.
- State the type of human remains and their significance, if appropriate, without being overly graphic.
- Prepare visitors for their potential encounters to give them the opportunity to choose not to view them.
- Offer guidance for respectful interactions, e.g. speak quietly, reconsider photography etc. Frame the notice with care and respect.
- Outline visitor protocols for respectful engagement, for example whether photography or filming or posting to social media platforms is permitted; and maintaining quiet and respectful behaviours within the space.
- Provide contact information for Museum staff who can assist if needed.

Notices should also be displayed for any reproduction or imagery featuring human remains, including photographs, video, artworks, casts and replicas, and other documentary processes.

These notices are developed in close consultation with CCWM's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Advisory Committee. CCWM seeks to acknowledge that these human remains are cared for on Gadigal land, and will acknowledge such respectfully in alignment with advice from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee. Cultural safety notices are also integrated into CCWM's website and online collections catalogue. See 7.1.

Further safety notices may be introduced to the Museum's public spaces (online and in person) to ensure visitors with lived experience of disability are included in sensitivity messaging on the advice of Accessible Arts and related organisations that advocate for people living with disability in public spaces.

## 3.0 Nicholson Collection of human remains

In the Nicholson Collection, the CCWM cares for once living people from Cyprus, Egypt, France, and the site of Jericho (West Bank). The largest collection of human remains originate from archaeological contexts in Jericho, excavated by Kathleen Kenyon in the 1950s with the support of the University of Sydney. Human remains from archaeological contexts also come from Cyprus, excavated primarily by Basil Hennessy and James Stewart in the 1950s-1960s.

The first Egyptian human remains were acquired by Sir Charles Nicholson in 1856-1857, and donated by him to the Museum in 1860. The Museum cares for the remains of complete mummified individuals and body parts, including a skull, embalmed head, hands and feet, a pair of infant's legs, bone fragments, teeth and locks of hair. These have come from various sources, including Sir Charles Nicholson, descendants of Grafton Elliot-Smith, an Australian physician working in Cairo who was responsible for the first X-rays on the royal mummies in the Cairo Museum and other private collectors and donors, including soldiers from the First and Second World Wars.

The Nicholson Collection also includes a reliquary containing the partial remains of Jean sans Peur ('John the Fearless' 1371-1419 AD) and his descendants dated from the late 18<sup>th</sup>- early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These are the only human remains from France in the collection.

The original catalogue of the collection (then known as the University of Sydney's Museum of Antiquities) published in 1870 by Edward Reeve also records that partial remains of three Aboriginal ancestors were given to the Museum by Mr F. O'Brien. These ancestors were transferred to the custodial care of the Macleay Museum in the 1980s.

A complete inventory of international human remains in our care can be provided on request. See also culturally specific individual guidelines (in development), as referenced in 1.1.

# 4.0 Collections care: storage, conservation and collections management

All CCWM collections are aligned to museum best practice standards. See Collections Guidelines, 2023. CCWM is committed to caring for human remains in alignment with cultural protocols and processes of the relevant descent communities, wherever possible. This includes our storage, movement and conservation practices.

## 4.1 Long term care and housing

CCWM seeks to ensure respect and cultural safety throughout our care of human remains in accordance with the Museum's culturally specific guidelines. This includes:

- Referring to the human remains with culturally sensitive language, e.g. 'Human remains of [XX name of cultural group XX]' rather than scientific classifications.
- Keeping detailed associated record of provenance and context.
- Ensuring rooms that hold remains are secure (lockable; and not in presence of major thoroughfares) and suitably briefed with cultural safety notices for staff and contractors who need to enter the room for reasons related to collection care (e.g. building maintenance, air conditioning, and cleaning staff). This can also include those who are not permitted to enter the room and require permission.
- Wherever possible, the storage conditions will meet ICOM museum standards, including temperature and humidity control and other environmental aspects including integrated pest management, and the monitoring of these standards for the long term care and protection of human remains.
- Remains are suitably boxed to prevent accidental viewing. They are held according to their geographical and cultural origins.
- All housing materials for human remains are acid free and archival. The bespoke archival boxes which hold the remains are labelled clearly to ensure they are not disturbed or accessed without prior approval.
- Maintaining quiet and respectful behaviour around the human remains (in accordance with the culturally specific guidelines) and within the housing space.

## 4.2 Movement

A restricted number of Collection Management staff who are trained in the safe movement of human remains are responsible for their proper handling and care. These staff, who will be pre-informed and present for any access and movement of remains, are the Head, Collection Management, Senior Conservator and the Senior Registration Officer, Collection Care and Access. They will undertake this responsibility with the utmost care ensuring that handling and movement of human remains only occurs when essential. These staff members will consult with relevant curators to check for any cultural protocols necessary based on advice from the descent community.

Movement protocols may include specific preparation and handling practices, ceremonial considerations or restrictions based on cultural traditions. Handling will be conducted discreetly and sensitively, with respect, mindfulness, care and dignity in accordance with the Museum's culturally specific guidelines, recognising that these remains are not objects, but individuals who were once living people. Staff will wear protective clothing, gloves and masks and avoid direct contact with human remains. Work, Health and Safety Guidelines will follow the safe handling of human remains.

Staff who work directly with human remains may suffer emotional distress for cultural, religious or personal reasons. CCWM will provide support to ensure the well-being of staff who handle and care for human remains.

# 5.0 Acquisitions, deaccessions and loans

The University commits that no acquisition, deaccession, disposal or loan of human remains will be considered without consultation and obtaining the **free, prior and informed consent** of descent communities, consulting with relevant national institutions, government bodies, and in line with acquisition guidelines (see Collections Guidelines, 2023).

## 5.1 Repatriation

In accordance with 2.3, CCWM supports the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP Article 1), including originating communities' rights to "maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expression" (Article 31.1). CCWM will work with the relevant authorities and community representatives of the respective countries or communities of origin to engage in honest, transparent and open conversations when considering cases of repatriation or restitution on a case-by-case basis.

International requests for repatriation of human remains will be managed in consultation with the relevant descent communities and in alignment with advice on specific cultural protocols for those communities.

See Collections Guidelines, 2023 (1.5.7). See also Culturally Specific Guidelines – Ancient Egypt (7.0) for Egyptian repatriation claims. Refer to culturally specific guidelines

Where additional guidance is needed, we may also refer to the National Museum Australia's *Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ancestral Human Remains management and repatriation policy*.<sup>2</sup>

Any requests for repatriation are considered through CCWM's Human Remains Advisory Group. For more information, please contact Dr Melanie Pitkin, Senior Curator, Nicholson Collection.

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<sup>2</sup> National Museum Australia, 'Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ancestral Human Remains management and repatriation policy'  
<[https://www.nma.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/558681/POL-C-011-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-ancestral-remains-and-repatriation-policy-v2.5-public.pdf](https://www.nma.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/558681/POL-C-011-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-ancestral-remains-and-repatriation-policy-v2.5-public.pdf)>.

# 6.0 Access

All CCWM collections are accessed in accordance with Collections Guidelines, 2023.

Access to human remains being cared for in storage is allowed only to authorised staff and to visitors whose request for access has been approved (via the Senior Curator, Nicholson Collection). See also Culturally Specific Guidelines – e.g. Ancient Egypt (6.0).

## 6.1 Community access

Community members may request access to the collections through formal communication with Nicholson Collection curators (refer to contact details at the end of this document). Members of the descent community to whom the remains belong will not be unreasonably denied access. All requests will be reviewed by the CCWM Human Remains Advisory Group. Where a request for collection access is approved, CCWM will ensure that cultural protocols are established and access requirements for people with disability are implemented.

## 6.2 Research access

Research of, and access to, human remains will be considered on a case-by-case basis and follows CCWM's standard 'Research Request' form and internal approval processes. These documents are available by request.

See also Culturally Specific Guidelines – Ancient Egypt (6.1).

## 6.3 Public display

CCWM approaches the display of human remains on a culture-by-culture and/or case by case basis for both in gallery and online displays (6.7). Public access is managed strictly in accordance with cultural protocols/wishes and processes according to advice from the respective descent communities, or representative authorities. For more on this, refer to Culturally Specific Guidelines – Ancient Egypt (4.0).

## 6.4 Photography and video

CCWM allows video and photography of human remains in the galleries, but label text (in development at the time of writing) and museum tour guides encourage visitors to pause and reflect on their motivations for videoing and/or photographing the human remains, and how they intend to use them. Commercial use is not permitted without detailed consideration of purpose and impact, and express permission from CCWM. Throughout the Museum, flash is not permitted. For CCWM's media and marketing guidelines around the use of photography and video of human remains, see 7.2.

Requests to photograph and film human remains being cared for in storage is allowed on a case-by-case basis, following review by CCWM's Human Remains Advisory Group. Requests for photography or filming should include details regarding

the purpose of the documentation and consents to any restrictions on the use of that documentation.

CCWM will consult with relevant descent communities to understand if there are particular cultural restrictions. Where there are known cultural objections to the photography or filming of specific human remains, CCWM will respect these objections, and will apply appropriate signage.

## 6.5 Reproductions, models and casts

The generation and use of reproductions of human remains will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. This includes 3D visualisations generated by CT scans, 3D printing, models, casts and purchased reproductions. The same applies to external requests for data to produce 3D visualisations, prints, models, casts or other forms of reproductions by third parties.

## 6.6 Facial and other reconstructions (including the use of virtual reality and artificial intelligence)

CCWM does not currently undertake facial or other reconstructions of human remains in our care. However virtual modelling of remains making use of CT data are currently available in the Museum's galleries. Applications to undertake facial, or other reconstructions on human remains in its collections will be reviewed by the Human Remains Advisory Group and may be granted, provided that there is clear scope of the project, descent community involvement and demonstrated proof that the material will have community and research benefits and will not perpetuate harms caused by some previous reconstructions.

## 6.7 Reflection space

CCWM offers an outdoor space for sensory reprieve. Visitors may like to use this space to rest and recover from any responses they may feel after viewing human remains, or during their broader visit. More information about this space, including images, can be found on the accessibility page of our website: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/museum/about-us/accessibility.html>. Or, for further assistance while at the Museum, speak to our friendly Front of House staff.

CCWM is working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee and other cultural advisors on how to make these spaces culturally safe and comfortable for any First Nations or culturally and linguistically diverse people who may visit the exhibition. To voice any concerns or share feedback about this, please contact: Chair, Human Remains Advisory Group or Chair, CCWM Accessibility Group.

## 6.8 Website

CCWM adopts the same philosophies online, as it does within its physical walls. A cultural notice about the display of human remains is featured on the 'Plan Your Visit' page. CCWM's collections search also provide cultural notices on the online catalogue preparing users for encountering images of human remains.

# 6.9 Education and learning

## 6.9.1 K-12

The study of human remains and ethics of their engagement forms part of the primary and secondary teaching curriculum in New South Wales. This is particularly the case with the syllabuses:

Stage 2 Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) syllabus (2024; to be implemented from 2027) <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10>

Stage 4 History K-10 Syllabus (2024; to be implemented from 2027)  
<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10>

Ancient History Stage 6 Syllabus (2017; with a new syllabus from 2027)  
<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie/ancient-history-2017> where 6 of the Investigating Ancient History component specifically asks students to study the treatment and display of human remains

and History Extension Stage 6 syllabus (2017; with a new syllabus from 2026)  
<https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nesa/curriculum/hsie/history-extension-stage-6-2017>

Human remains are included in the teaching of K-12 students, and is adapted by CCWM's trained education officers, and guides based on the age group of the students and in line with curricula requirements of study. All classes are issued with a cultural safety notice before preparing for their excursion and upon entering CCWM, and this is repeated prior to entering the relevant galleries; and reinforced in digital and other educational resources developed for students. In line with NSW curriculum, age-appropriate discussion of the ethics of the collection, study and display of human remains is a significant role of the Museum's school outreach activities.

For K-12 education and learning as it specifically applies to ancient Egyptian mummified human remains, see: Culturally Specific Guidelines – Ancient Egypt (6.3.1 and 6.3.2).

## 6.9.2 Tertiary

The study of human remains and ethics of their engagement takes place in CCWM galleries and learning spaces with tertiary students and staff.

For any human remains requested for study or research purposes in learning spaces, approvals are given on a case-by-case basis with the relevant curators. Requests can be made from any educators and/or students across the University of Sydney, as well as external institutions. Curators must consider the purpose and potential impacts of the research, and consult with descent communities where possible. They must follow any cultural protocols and processes around use of human remains for

study or research purposes. Where there are known cultural objections to the study or research of specific human remains, CCWM will respect these objections.

### **6.9.3 Public programs**

Talks, seminars and panel discussions are invited on aspects of human remains research and are reviewed by CCWM's Human Remains Advisory Group. Human remains do not form part of CCWM's corporate engagement program, although their incorporation may be considered on a case-by-case basis. CCWM must seek the free, prior and informed consent of any descent communities to use human remains in CCWM's corporate engagement program or public talks, seminars and panel discussions. They must follow any cultural protocols and processes around use of human remains for these purposes. Where there are known cultural objections to use specific human remains in public programming, CCWM will respect these objections.

# 7.0 Implementation

## 7.1 Training

All staff, volunteers and relevant interns are required to undergo a training session around CCWM's Human Remains Research Project, and the development and philosophies of the guidelines herein. CCWM is particularly committed to establishing a common understanding and messaging among paid and unpaid, casual and continuing staff that is consistently shared with its audiences across all platforms.

Any updates to the guidelines, or changes to the Museum's practices will be shared with staff at the monthly all-staff meetings. Staff will have the opportunity to provide feedback and ask any questions of CCWM's Human Remains Advisory Group to ensure all staff are included and kept informed.

## 7.2 Marketing and media

CCWM will not use any images of human remains in any of its marketing or promotional collateral, including social media, and does not permit usage of any images of human remains in CCWM's care in this way by third parties.

Note: Prior to 2024, human remains were included in the Museum's marketing and merchandising. These images may be found on past iterations of the Museum's website accessible through web archival tools, or on third-party sites where permissions had been granted for their use.

## 7.3 Merchandising

CCWM carefully reviews all retail products relating to the subject of human remains, and closely related items, to ensure it is in keeping with the guidelines presented herein. All proposed relevant merchandise is reviewed by CCWM's Human Remains Advisory Group, and any previously approved merchandise is monitored as part of the committee's ongoing remit. They must follow any cultural protocols and processes around the use of human remains for these purposes. Where there are known cultural objections to the use of specific human remains in merchandising, CCWM will respect these objections.

# Contact

Dr Melanie Pitkin, Senior Curator, Nicholson Collection:  
[melanie.pitkin@sydney.edu.au](mailto:melanie.pitkin@sydney.edu.au)

Candace Richards, Assistant Curator, Nicholson Collection:  
[candace.richards@sydney.edu.au](mailto:candace.richards@sydney.edu.au)

To speak with us in person, or to navigate your visit to the Museum please contact the Museum's reception desk on +61 2 9351 2812.

[sydney.edu.au/museums](http://sydney.edu.au/museums)

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