Friday, 22nd November 2019

# **Gangalidda Garawa and Nyamal Nations receive significant material from Manchester Museum at Australia House handover ceremony**

A delegation of Traditional Owners from the Gangalidda Garawa Nation and representatives from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) attended a moving handover ceremony at Australia House, London. The handover ceremony signified the official return of 18 culturally significant items from the Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, to the Gangalidda Garawa people of the Queensland Gulf Country and the Nyamal people of the inland Pilbara, Western Australia.

Gangalidda and Garawa traditional owner, Mangubadijarri Yanner hailed the significance of the occasion for his people and for reconciliation in Australia. “As a young Aboriginal person and as a proud Gangalidda man, this is, to me and my community, what true practical reconciliation looks like”, Mr Yanner said. "I am honoured to have the opportunity to carry on the work of my ancestors by bringing our sacred cultural heritage items and artefacts back to country where they belong."

The handover ceremony follows the Manchester Museum’s announcement on the 4th October 2019 that it would unconditionally return 43 items from its collection to four Aboriginal communities. A further handover ceremony for the Aranda people of Central Australia and the Yawuru people of the western Kimberley will be held in late February.

AIATSIS CEO, Craig Ritchie said a lot was gained by all involved in the return of cultural material. “Repatriation is not about what is lost but about what is gained”, Mr Ritchie said. It’s not just about the objects leaving, but about the relationships that are left behind”.  
  
The handover ceremony was hosted by the High Commission of Australia at Australia House, London. In attendance were the Hon George Brandis QC, High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, and Esme Ward, Director of Manchester Museum.

AIATSIS partnered with the Manchester Museum and the Gangalidda Garawa and Nyamal communities to research, identify and repatriate the material to keeping places on their traditional Country. The returned material includes secret / sacred and ceremonial items.

The delegation and the items will begin their voyage home to Australia on Saturday evening.

Read more about the [Return of Cultural Heritage project](https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/research-themes/culture-and-heritage/return-cultural-heritage-project).  
The AIATSIS-led Return of Cultural Heritage Project is funded by the Australian Government as part of the measures to mark the [250th anniversary in 2020 of James Cook’s first voyage to Australia](https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/cultural-heritage/250th-anniversary-captain-cooks-voyage-australia).

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