The Repatriation of Aboriginal Cultural Artefacts: a viable option?

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Abstract

This thesis provides an examination of the viability of repatriation. The repatriation of Aboriginal cultural artefacts is focused on and discussed from a theoretical and practical perspective. The significant influence repatriation has had on the development of archaeology in Australia is investigated with particular reference to archaeological practices.

The central theme throughout the discussion is the perception that repatriation is a viable process, that results in initiatives which provide for the multiplicity of interests concerned with the archaeological investigation of Australia's indigenous heritage.
Australia - South Australia: Study Area

Shading indicates study area
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1.0 Introduction

The repatriation of Aboriginal cultural material is a topic which involves numerous institutions and interest groups in complex and competing social issues such as human rights, race relations, spirituality, science, education, ethics, and law. In recent years, repatriation has become a prominent issue, not only within the field of archaeology, but also to the wider community, who have been informed of the issue via the press.

The repatriation debate in Australia has tended to focus on human skeletal remains. Recent events, such as the dispute between the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (hereafter referred to as TALC) and archaeologists from La Trobe University resulted in the debate evolving to include Aboriginal cultural artefacts. It became evident that discussion and debate concerning this area of repatriation was somewhat lacking, whilst having the potential to impact upon archaeologists more than ever before. It was therefore decided that the repatriation of Aboriginal cultural artefacts was to be the focus of this thesis.

Repatriation is defined as the return of cultural artefacts to the original owners or their descendants.

There are two major aims of this research. One, is to examine the issue of repatriation in Australia and South Australia, focusing on the coordinated roles of archaeologists, museums, and Aboriginal people in this process.
Second, to explore the viability of repatriation in regard to three groups significantly influenced by this issue: archaeologists, museums, and Aboriginal people.

The research examines repatriation from a theoretical and practical perspective. The practical component is a case study that involves an examination of Aboriginal cultural artefacts, presently stored in the archaeology collection of the South Australian Museum. Examining the collection is fundamental to the entire study as it provides a link between the theoretical issue of repatriation and the actual repercussions experienced as a result of repatriation.

The case study is followed by three separate, but related discussions concerning particular issues pertinent to the repatriation debate. The major issues of conflict underlying repatriation is discussed first, followed by discussing the influence repatriation has had on archaeological practices, and concluding with an examination of the validity of repatriation.

Although repatriation is not purely an Australian phenomenon the discussion focuses on repatriation in Australia, with a secondary focus on South Australia. This is attributed to the fact that repatriation is an extremely complex issue which generates various opinions and reactions. By focusing on a particular area and specific interests groups, the discussion is comprehensive without being overwhelmed by the enormity of the issue.
Within this thesis I put forward Aboriginal perspectives in regard to particular issues concerning repatriation. I feel that it is important to mention that this is a personal interpretation gained from numerous readings of relevant articles. The term Aboriginal is used in its broadest sense, recognising the wide diversity of people who identify themselves as Aboriginal (after Bowdler 1983: 408).

The overall objective is to determine whether repatriation has the potential to facilitate archaeological research in Australia, and produce conclusive research that provides for the varied interests concerned with the archaeological research of Australia's indigenous past.
2.0 Case Study

The case study involves an examination of Aboriginal cultural artefacts presently housed in the archaeology collection of the South Australian Museum. The artefacts have been collected from the Riverland region, in between Renmark and Overland Corner, along the River Murray in South Australia (refer to map 1 page ii).

The examination of the collection is fundamental to the entire study. It provides a link between the theoretical issue of repatriation and the actual possibility of repatriation occurring. By understanding what the collection consists of the value attributed to such collections by, archaeologists, museum staff, and Aboriginal people, can be placed into perspective. Past debates and discussions regarding repatriation have focused on material that is the centre of controversy and debate (see for example: Mulvaney 1989, 1991; Pardoe 1991; Bray and Killion 1994; Darby 1995; Murray and Allen 1995; Maslen 1995; Lahn 1996). The value attributed to cultural material in these instances, does not realistically reflect the prevalent value attributed to the majority of collections containing Aboriginal cultural material, housed in institutions around the country.

Lahn(1996) discusses in detail the processes underlying the value attributed to the Kow Swamp remains. The antiquity and scarcity of the material ensured their high status within Australian archaeology and physical anthropology.
All entries are in a numerical sequence and prefixed with an ‘A’. Acquisitions are catalogued according to locality which is based upon map hundred sections. For instance artefacts in the study area were catalogued under the Renmark sheet of the 1:250,000 national map series.

Time constraints resulted in a preliminary examination of the collection. Information from the computer database was checked against the actual collection. A summary of the register search was complied (refer: Appendix - table 1: Register Summary page 88). Information on the table includes:

- locality of artefacts (in alphabetical order)
- accession number
- description
- source
- unit/shelf/lot number

Locality, accession number and unit/shelf/lot numbers are self explanatory. Comments made in regard to the description of the artefacts were restricted to elements such as type, material and colour. For example, an artefact from Loxton with accession number A51404, has the following description; flake, chert, blue. The source of the material describes either a donation or the particular provenance of the cultural material.

The computer database and card index records generally provided no information regarding the description or source of the artefacts.

The examination of the collection and further literature searches provided some additional information which was added to the table where appropriate.
To gain additional information in regard to the collection, Tindale's journals and other relevant records that are housed in the Museum and other institutions such as the libraries at Flinders University, Adelaide University and the State Library were consulted.

2.2 Introduction to Study Area

The study area is located in the Murray Basin, one of two smaller Basins that constitute the eastern part of the larger, Murray-Darling Basin. The Murray Basin extends into western New South Wales, north west Victoria, and south eastern South Australia, comprising of a total of three hundred thousand kilometres square of semi-arid land (refer: map 2 page 9). The Murray Basin is a low lying, saucer shaped basin with thin, flat lying Cainozoic sediments (Brown and Stephenson 1991:1). The Basin developed in the Cainozoic, following the break-up between Antarctica and the southern region of Australia, during the Late Mesozoic (Brown et. al., 1991:313).

The deep, sedimentary nature of the Basin has resulted in a relatively stoneless terrain. Local pedogenic materials of the area are silcrete, opal and chert which are commonly used for artefacts in this region. Heavier types of material such as silicified sandstone and quartzite would have most likely been imported from the margins of the Murray-Darling Basin. For example, from the Great Dividing Range or Mt. Lofty Ranges where Palaeozoic and Precambrian rocks are formed (Gill 1974:88).
The River Murray is part of The Murray-Darling River System that extends over the area of the Murray Basin. The River Murray, which is two thousand, five hundred and seventy kilometres in length, has its source in the Snowy Mountains and completes its journey into the Southern Ocean via Lake Alexandrina on the south coast of South Australia.

Nearing Renmark the river begins to flow into the "Murray Gorge". The gorge, which at times is only one to two kilometres in width, extends to Lake Alexandrina at the mouth of the Murray. The trench and upper tracts of the gorge cut through Quaternary clays and Pliocene sands, while further downstream the river valley is confined within Miocene limestone cliffs (Brown et. al., 1991:33).

The study area is part of the Murray-Darling River valley. It is characterised by the Mallee dunefields which are transversed by entrenched river valleys and associated floodplains. The wetlands are part of the ancestral river preserved as lagoons, swamps and lakes, which prior to the artificial maintenance of the river flow, were subject to the seasonal movements of the river level. The Mallee is dominated by aeolian dunefields, dry, ephemeral and semi permanent lakes, and flanking lunettes (Brown et. al., 1991:32).

The region experiences a range of climatic conditions but is regarded as semi-arid. The vegetation is sparse with the majority of the native vegetation in the region being cleared. The river valleys are well vegetated with dense areas of trees and shrubs, while the Mallee region is characterised by tall, woody shrubs (Brown et al., 1991:34).
The Murray Basin
2.3 Human History of the Area

The collection from the Riverland is the direct result of the activities of indigenous people who inhabited the landscape prior to non-Aboriginal arrival.

Accounts of Aboriginal oral traditions from this region attribute the creation of the River Murray to a serpent, the blind river maker, or Nooreele a male figure and his three sons. Regardless of which creation figure Aboriginal people identify with in this area, they contend that they have always lived along the river since its creation during the Dreaming (Hemming and Cook n.d.:15).

In discussing the Aboriginal heritage which relates to the collection Tindale's 'tribal' boundaries have been adopted. The concept and use of the term 'tribe' in relation to Australian Aboriginal groups is regarded as inappropriate and outdated. For the purpose of this thesis though, the term is used in its broadest sense to define the 'tribal' group and their territorial boundaries.

According to Tindale (1974:32):

The tribe is the largest consistently named and recognised unit known to aborigines. It is composed of a few or many exogamous clans. Generally speaking, they have a name, recognise a territorial boundary, linguistic bonds, and a common system of kinship.

Based upon Tindale’s research (1974:211) the study area was occupied by the Erawirung. Alternative names include the Jirau, Eraweerung, Eramwirrangu. Their 'tribal' boundary extended from above Paringa, to Loxton in the south, to Overland Corner in the west and was bordered by the River Murray to the north. Along the River to the west their neighbours were the Ngawait and
Ngaiawang, to the east the Ngintait, directly to the south were the Ngarkat, and to the north the Danggali (refer: map 3 page 12).

There is little historical or ethnographical information describing the indigenous inhabitants of this area at the time of European contact. Captain Charles Shirt and his party were probably the first Europeans to come into contact with Aboriginal groups along the Murray. Shirt was followed by the Overlanders transporting stock to the new colony of South Australia. Edward John Eyre, explorer and later Protector of Aborigines provides the most detailed account of Aboriginal life on the Murray during the period of contact. His detailed descriptions provided the basis for later research by anthropologists such as Radcliffe-Brown and Tindale.

One aspect significantly commented on is the population densities along the Murray at the time of contact. During Shirt's expedition down the Murray in 1830 he recorded the existence of many large groups of Aborigines in places such as Lake Victoria and Lake Bonney (Hemming 1983:9).

Eyre also reports high population figures which at the time would have been depleted by the stress of European arrival:

> On the Murray River, which is, perhaps, the most densely populated part of the country, I imagine there are, about three to four natives to every mile of the river, which as it winds very considerably would give a large population to the square mile. (Hemming 1984:26).

Recent studies concerning population along the River Murray also estimate high population densities. Dowling (1990:108) estimates that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Riverland region would have supported between 0.3 and 0.5 persons per square kilometre.
'Tribal' groups of the River Murray

Riverland region of South Australia (After Tindale, 1974)
Suggesting a total population of about three thousand for the Riverland prior to European arrival in the region.

The Riverland was the location for large seasonal congregations of neighbouring groups, who gathered to participate in ceremonies, and trade and exchange goods and information (Hemming 1984:10). Lake Bonney and Lake Victoria were the location of some of these gathering as described by Eyre:

At certain seasons of the year, usually in the spring or summer, when food is most abundant, several tribes meet together in each other's territory for the purpose of festivity or war, or to barter and exchange such food, clothing, weapons, implements or other commodities. (Hemming 1983:8).

At the time of non-Aboriginal arrival in Australia, the lifestyle of the Erawirung and their neighbours would have been relatively sedentary compared to other indigenous groups in Australia. This can be attributed to the Murray River providing a reliable water source and an abundance of seasonal food. Hemming (1984:32) states that travelling would have occurred for ceremonies and social events rather than in response to economic reasons. Families would have spent the majority of their time living near the main sites associated with older male members of the group. Due to occupying one area for up to six months a year, semi-permanent camps would have been erected.
Eyre provides a description of the type of dwelling people in this region constructed:

at times, large long huts are constructed, in which, from five to ten families reside, each having their own separate fire. The material of which the huts are composed, are generally small branches or boughs of tress, covered in wet weather with grass, or other similar material. At other times, and especially if large, or made in wet weather, they are formed of thick solid logs of wood, piled and arranged much in the same way. (Hemming et al., n. d.: 35).

This description is consistent with a recent account in one of Tindale 's journals. During a conversation between Tindale and Paul Lawson, a local from the Riverland region, Lawson described that he had seen several groups of Aboriginal "old log huts" in the region (1965-71:1383).

In relation to the artefacts produced, Hemming and Cook (n. d.:32-33) postulate that their largely sedentary lifestyle would have resulted in more specialised objects in comparison to, for example the desert regions of Australia. In Central Australia a spearthrower was a multifunctional artefact used for throwing spears, butchering game and carrying food. Groups along the Murray used the spearthrower as a specialised weapon to throw spears and in ceremonies.

The continual increase of European occupation in this region contrasts with the dramatic decline in Aboriginal population. Exact numbers regarding decline are difficult to compile due to a lack of documentation, poor accuracy in indicators, such as censuses, and the high mobility of Aboriginal people. Dowling (1990:95) estimates that within a period of eighty one years, population densities of groups inhabiting the Riverland such as the Erawirung had declined to such an extent they, "had reached the edge of annihilation".
Despite the dramatic decrease in indigenous population with the arrival of Europeans, the Riverland continues to support a large and dynamic Aboriginal population. Today, Aboriginal people whose heritage relates to this region have maintained contact with the region, with many living in Riverland towns such as Barmera, Berri and on Gerard Mission (Hemming et. al., n. d.:45).

2.4 Archaeology of the Region

The Riverland region, despite being rich in Aboriginal heritage, past and present, has experienced little archaeological investigation. This is surprising considering that the region was perhaps the birth place of Australian archaeology with the first 'scientific' archaeological excavation conducted by Hale and Tindale at Devons Downs in 1929.

The archaeology of the Lower Murray has been reasonably well documented with the discovery of sites such as Roonka, Devon Downs, and Fromms Landing (for example see: Hale and Tindale 1930; Mulvaney 1960; Pretty 1977; Smith 1982; Paton 1983). Whilst, further up towards the central River Murray extensive anthropological and archaeological research has been conducted by Pardoe, at places such as Lindsay Island and Wamba Yadu, over numerous years (1993, 1994, 1995) (refer: map 4 page 16).

During the 1960s and 1970s a "casual investigation" of archaeological sites around Lake Bonney and on the western side of the Pyap Bend was undertaken by two local residents, the late Mr. D. Bannear and Mr. G. Woolmer.
Aboriginal Archaeological sites of the River Murray

As mentioned in the text.
Archaeological sites within the river valley were identified, with a map and an accompanying list compiled. The results of their research formed the basis of the only publication to date regarding Aboriginal history in the region titled, *Riverland Aborigines of the Past - An Aboriginal history of the Barmera Region* (Dowling 1990:6).

Masters research undertaken by Dowling (1990) focused on Aboriginal population decline in the Riverland. Included within the investigation was an archaeological survey of the river valley, floodplains, and mallee area located in this study area. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the extent of Aboriginal exploitation of the river valley and mallee environments. Dowling recorded archaeological sites within these two areas. The preliminary survey determined that the mallee was not as frequently exploited as the river valley (1990:16-20).

Within the river valley Dowling (1990:20) divides sites into five categories; open air occupation sites, major burial grounds, quarries, rockshelters, and suspected Pleistocene sites. The high frequency of sites in the north west of the wetlands, around Lake Bonney is attributed to archaeological preservation and visibility rather than reflecting intense site use in this area. As the documentation related to the artefacts is generally insufficient it is difficult to determine confidently if particular types of artefact are associated with particular types of sites.
2.5 The Collection

The South Australian Museum is the main repository for Aboriginal cultural material in the state. The Aboriginal collection in the Museum has been described as the largest in the world, unofficially valued at over one hundred million dollars (Fourmile 1988:23). The majority of the material is managed by the anthropology division of the Museum.

Material is categorised into different collections such as, human biology, ethnography, which includes sacred and secular items, archaeology, and archival documents, made up of written records, genealogies, photos, film, tapes, and paintings (Aslin and Ling 1991:10).

The area from which the artefacts have been collected is the Riverland region, located in between Renmark and Overland Corner, along the River Murray in South Australia (refer: map 5 page 19). They are presently housed in the archaeology collection of the South Australian Museum.

The majority of the artefacts have been acquired via donations from local people or collected during survey expeditions organised by the SA Museum or other institutions such as the University of Adelaide. For instance in the late 1800s Sir Edward Stirling and E. R. Waite donated substantial collections to the Museum (Tindale 1968:632). While, the artefacts collected from Paringa and Loxton were the direct result of survey collections conducted by Museum
Riverland Area Map: Provenance of cultural artefacts

In Archaeology collection, South Australian Museum. ♦ = Quarry Location
anthropologist Norman Tindale. In July 1961 Tindale journeyed to Paringa after being informed of two sites. At the first site, Tindale collected 3 hammerstones, a single flake, and an eroded piece of pumice over 9 inches in diameter. A chert quarry was the second site, at which Tindale collected two flakes, one a sugary quartzite material and the other a coarse gritty sandstone (refer: figure 1 page 21). Tindale identifies the 3 hammerstones from the previous site, as being of the same material as the latter. (Tindale 1940-1956:637-641).

The collection of cultural artefacts from this region number over 300 individual pieces. The collection consists predominantly of stone tool artefacts. The objective of this section is to provide an understanding of the collection, it is not designed to be an analysis of the stone tools within the collection. As such the description of the stone tools occurs at a rudimentary level.

Stone tool types such as cores, scrapers, and flakes occur most frequently within the collection. Other artefacts of special interest due to their infrequent nature within the collection are; a Boomerang dredged from the bottom of Lake Bonney, near Barmera, numerous grindstones, and pieces of red ochre. Quartz, silcrete and chert are the most frequently occurring materials within the collection.
Figure 1

a: sugary quartzite flake  
b: coarse sandstone

(l'indalc, 1940-51, 647)
The largest density of artefacts occur at Katarapako Island and Renmark. A total of 261 stone artefacts and one piece of red ochre, have been collected from Katarapako Island, located to the west of the study area, in the river valley. Renmark, also in the river valley but to the northeast has produced 103 stone artefacts.

The most frequently occurring material is quartz followed by cherts which vary in colour from white, shades of brown, red, and blue. Silcrete and quartzite are represented the least and occur in the same proportions. The material would have been obtained from local and imported sources.

The cherts were most probably obtained locally from the numerous chert quarries in the area. Spring Cart Gully, Pike River and Paringa Quarry all situated in the northeast and in close vicinity to each other, are all chert quarries. In the west, chert quarries exist at Overland Corner, Sugarloaf Hill, and Memdelbuik, located to the east of Lake Bonney (Dowling 1990:6-19). While, red chert is thought to have been available at Lyrup (refer: map 5 page 19). Quartz and perhaps some chert were obtained from the Mt. Lofty Ranges, while silcrete quarries could be found west up the river at Berribee, located on the southern banks of Lindsay Island (Pretty 1977; Grist 1995). Pretty (1977:308) contends that the trade of stone would have occurred along the River Murray until its southern limits, then into the Mallee regions extending up towards the Flinders Ranges.
2.6 Discussion

The collection examined for this case study is the result of the combined activities of, Aborigines known within this study area as the Erawirung, and non-Aborigines whose actions ultimately resulted in their placement within the South Australian Museum. The artefacts in this collection, of which stone tools predominate, are largely representative of the majority of indigenous collections from Australia housed in the archaeology collection of the South Australian Museum.

The possible repatriation of this collection could result in Aborigines, the Museum, and archaeologists experiencing some of the advantages and disadvantages examined thoroughly in section 5.0. For instance, from an archaeological and museum perspective, the collection has numerous inherent values. The variety in type, and raw material of the artefacts can provide insights into tool technology, use of materials, and possibly trade. The collection could be useful in a comparative analysis with other regions such as Grist (1995) demonstrated in his examination of Berribee Quarry on Lindsay Island, in the central Murray. Grist examined different collections in the South Australian Museum, one of which was this collection, to gain an understanding of the material he was analysing and to discover possible alternative quarry sources. Grist (1995:61) identified the material from Paringa as consisting of similar lithic and quarry material to that found at Berribee.
The repatriation of this collection could result in the loss of access to an important data source. On another level, it symbolises, for archaeologists and Museum staff, a relinquishing of control over this cultural material.

Aboriginal people who presently relate their heritage to the Riverland could possibly perceive value, in the return of this collection. The collection provides a physical representation of their heritage. Repatriation facilitates access to this material which can result in community initiatives, such as museums and interpretative centres. Activities such as this can fulfil larger goals such as self determination and the exertion of control over their past and future.

If repatriation of the collection was to occur, and relations between the South Australian Museum and the Aboriginal people requesting the return of the material was positive, opportunities for further research may result.

The case study has demonstrated the possible effects that would result from repatriating this collection. Thereby, providing a more representative perspective of repatriation, than past discussions concerning cultural material at the centre of debate or controversy, have been able to reflect.
3.0 Conflicting Issues

Repatriation is an emotive and contentious issue, in which conflict has arisen between the majority of people practicing archaeology and indigenous people who have been the subject of archaeological research for many years.

Underlying the issue of repatriation, is the question of ownership and the difference in the value attributed to cultural artefacts. These are two main areas of contention within the repatriation debate. An examination of these issues can assist to elucidate the basis of the conflict regarding repatriation.

It will be demonstrated that the basis of the conflict relates to a fundamental difference in attitudes. In the past these attitudes have been regarded unequally, which has resulted in the conflict invariably associated with repatriation. Recent moves by numerous institutions and individuals to provide a balance has resulted in situations which have proven beneficial for all involved.

In general, the dissent that exists between the majority of archaeologists and indigenous people in regard to repatriation relates to a fundamental in world views (Price 1991:15; Pullar 1994:17). World views can be described as the basic assumptions a group of people have about themselves, the world they live in, and their place in it (Price 1991:15).

This difference results in people with a western, scientific education generally placing greater value on the scientific aspect of repatriated material.
While the majority of indigenous people place greater importance on the educational and religious aspects of their cultural heritage.

The notion of time is an excellent example of this difference in world views. In western society time is regarded as linear. The passing of time occurs in a sequence of events. The past, present, and future are distinct from each other. Archaeology allows the past to be discovered, interpreted and understood (Zimmerman 1989:214). Within this context the past is preserved as a period in time distinct from the present.

For the majority of indigenous people, time is regarded as circular in nature. There is no distinction between past, present, and future. The past is part of the present, the future - although unknown - is influenced by the past and present. Stanner describes this concept of time in his definition of 'The Dreaming' in Australian Aboriginal society:

> One cannot fix The Dreaming in time: it was, and is, everywhen,... such a time is still part of the present. (Edwards 1987:225).

Archaeology, therefore is not needed to discover the past, as it is already known and acknowledged on a daily basis through activities such as, oral traditions, cultural practices and rituals (Zimmerman 1989:214).

The question of ownership can be directly related to the right of control over cultural artefacts. Views are generally divided into support for indigenous ownership, or the universal right of all humans to the past. For many archaeologists, ownership represents a relinquishing of control over cultural artefacts.
Resulting in a loss of access to vital research resources and their subsequent destruction. In contrast, Aborigines regard ownership as an acknowledgment of their link with the past, control over the direction of their future and as part of a larger movement towards self-determination (Tivy 1993:25).

Access to the past by all humans has been a view generally put forward by the academic community in response to Aboriginal requests for ownership. Professor John Mulvaney, a prominent academic within Australian archaeology has been an active supporter of this view, writing numerous papers and lecturing regularly on the topic (see for example: 1981; 1985; 1989; 1991). Mulvaney postulates that ultimate Aboriginal ownership would result in a, "racial monopoly of data" (Mulvaney 1981:20). Alternatively, Mulvaney advocates the idea of a universal or collective heritage, accessible to study by all humans (Mulvaney 1981; 1985). In response to the return of the Kow Swamp collection to the Echuca Aboriginal Cooperative in late August 1990, Mulvaney stated that:

[i]t is not simply the Kow Swamp relics which are at stake, but the future of past Aboriginal culture and the freedom of all peoples of any race to study it. (Mulvaney 1991:12).

The majority of Australia's indigenous material culture is held in major institutions such as museums, universities and art galleries located in the capital cities of each State and Territory. For example, the state museums contain some one hundred thousand items defined as Aboriginal cultural material (Fourmile 1996:9).
The material is deemed to be Crown property and is held in trust on behalf of all Australian citizens. Each institution administers its collections according to its own policies and state legislation. Aboriginal ownership of the various collections that consist of their cultural heritage, is not recognised by federal or state governments (Fourmile 1996:9). It is therefore not surprising that for Aboriginal people the issue of ownership relates to access and control over their cultural heritage.

Fourmile (1989:2; 1992:3) contends that the nature and location of museums results in alienating Aboriginal people from their heritage. The centralised city locations, generally hundreds of kilometres from the region the material was discovered makes it difficult for Aboriginal people to gain access to their heritage. Fourmile adds that museums have failed to adequately inform Aboriginal communities, groups or individuals of the relevant material they have in their possession. For example, it was only by chance that Fourmile (1996:9) discovered that the South Australian Museum and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies held material which related to her family and group, the Kunggandji and Yidiniji people of the rainforest region near Cairns in Queensland.

Additionally, Fourmile states that Aboriginal heritage has become fragmented due to the differences in museum administration and management throughout the states and territories. Not only does the South Australian Museum and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies house material associated with the Kunggandji and Yidiniji, Fourmile discovered that the state museums of Queensland and New South Wales, and the National Museum of Australia
contained subsequent material(1996:9). This contributes to the difficulty already experienced by the descendants of that heritage in accessing it.

In response to such criticisms, many academics describe the importance of such collections in education, providing data for research, facilitating international understanding and providing a comparative cultural yardstick (Wilson 1985:102). Furthermore, within Aboriginal society, with the exception of particular sacred items, the preservation of cultural artefacts for future generations was not practised. Cultural artefacts and creative works of art were generally discarded or destroyed when no longer needed (Sculthorpe 1985:22; Mulvaney 1985:88). In comparison, Mulvaney (1985:88), points out that the initial collection and storage of Aboriginal artefacts, carried out by archaeologists and facilitated by museums was a, "western initiative" which ensured their preservation.

While many Aborigines will acknowledge the importance such collecting activities have played in preserving their heritage, many feel that the role of archaeologists and museums is now one of preservation and provision of collections, at the expense of the groups from which they are derived (Fourmile 1996:10). Ownership is directly associated with access to cultural heritage. This is identified as fundamental to the continuation of Aboriginal culture and crucial to achieving self determination. The present situation can only result in their "continued cultural dispossession" (Fourmile 1996:10).
On another level the conflict associated with repatriation concerns the
differences in the value attributed to cultural artefacts (Trope and Echo-Hawk
Sculthorpe(1985:23), highlights this difference in attitudes, when she states that
museums and archaeologists tend to place emphasis on the preservation of
cultural artefacts. While for Aborigines the importance of the artefact lies not
so much in the actual object itself, but rather in its contribution to the
preservation of their culture.

The majority of archaeologists are opposed to repatriation because it represents
a loss of access to research materials and their possible destruction via reburial
or similar activities. The importance of this data lies in an ability to contribute
to the history of all humans and the continued existence of archaeology
(Frankel 1984:15).

Julie Lahn's (1996) examination of the social history of the Kow Swamp remains
supports this perspective. In her discussion, Lahn (1996:45) states that although
some archaeologists feel that Aboriginal views are important, the scientific
value of research is attributed greater value as it is universally applicable. This
is associated with the assumption made by the majority of archaeologists that
the validity assigned to their research results in the creation of the only credible
version of the past. Dr Richard Cosgrove illustrates this point in his response to
the loss of cultural artefacts from La Trobe University in 1995. He describes the
value of the artefacts as being able to contribute to the understanding of human
migration patterns and evolution (Darby 1995).
From a museum perspective, South Australian Museum policy states that morally it has no right to keep the human and cultural remains of people whose descendants have requested their return. It also recognises the scientific value of such material and the contribution such research can provide, not only to Aboriginal heritage, but to the heritage of all humans (Anderson 1990a:121).

This attitude is also dominant within American archaeology. The Society for American Archaeology opposes the "universal or indiscriminate reburial of human remains from collections or excavations" (Marsh 1992:104). They believe that repatriation requests should be handled on a case-by-case basis, with the scientific importance, cultural and religious value, and the strength of the claimant(s) relationship to the remains considered fully. The society is also opposed to the creation of federal legislation to regulate the treatment of human remains (Marsh 1992:104).

For the majority of Australian Aboriginal people cultural artefacts are valued for their educational and religious significance. The loss of cultural knowledge can be attributed to the removal of these artefacts (Fourmile 1992:3, 1996:10). People can be educated about their culture through the use of objects within ceremonies and other cultural practices. While the reintroduction of objects into a community can result in the re-emergence of forgotten cultural practices. Anderson (1990b:77) relates an incident where an Aboriginal community from South Australia were able to revive their cultural practice of wood carving after examining cultural artefacts housed in the South Australian Museum.
Cultural artefacts regarded by Aboriginal people as sacred are important in maintaining spiritual beliefs and ceremonies. In Central Australia, sacred objects such as *tjurungas*, sacred stones and boards are regarded as physical embodiments of the Dreaming or ancestral beings. They represent the groups' relationship to the land and spiritual world (Anderson 1990a:112). The performance of these ceremonies are vital in maintaining harmony within the universe and promoting continuity for the group. In response to the return of more than one hundred and fifty sacred ceremonial objects from the Strehlow collection to the Central Land Council, the Chairman, Mr Rex Gravities stated that .. "the objects should be returned to real, living people to be part of our ceremonies again" (Land Rights News 1995:2).

The repatriation of cultural artefacts allows for the re-emergence and continuation of cultural practices which permits the expression of spiritual beliefs and cultural identity (Sackler, et al., 1992:61). Within this context repatriation can also be recognised as part of a larger goal to promote their self-determination and regain control over their heritage (Fourmile 1989, 1992; Yellow-Bird and Milun 1992:20; Tivy 1993:25).

In the past, the presence of many divergent interests in Aboriginal heritage was not readily recognised, acknowledged, or accepted. The scientific views held by the majority of archaeologists tended to outweigh those held by many indigenous Australians.
For instance, during the late 1960s and early 1970s all Australian states introduced legislative measures to protect Aboriginal ‘relics’ which were defined as having archaeological significance. This bias was a result of lobbying by archaeologists concerned with the threat of damage and loss of sites and artefacts. Legislation formulated during this period focused on the archaeological significance of sites and artefacts. The significance of these representations of the past to Aboriginal people was generally not acknowledged within the legislation (Flood 1989:80). While, in 1983 the Australian Archaeological Association (hereafter referred to as AAA) supported requests for the return of post contact indigenous skeletal remains, however, concern was expressed regarding the future of repatriated material. The destruction of returned remains or artefacts was regarded as the destruction of irreplaceable scientific data (Mulvaney 1991:16).

A survey of legislation relating to the administration of Aboriginal collections, conducted by Adrian Marrie in 1987 highlighted this continued inequality. Marrie discovered that in Australian State and Federal museum legislation no provisions or requirements existed for Aboriginal input into the management of such collections. Additionally, there were no Aboriginal members on governing boards or councils, Aboriginal committees or advisory bodies provided for in the legislation. The only exception at the time was the National Museum of Australia Act 1980 which formally required the employment of indigenous Australians within the Museum (Fourmile 1989:2).
In the early 1980s Aborigines began to actively promote the importance of their views and involvement in the management of their heritage. Ros Langford’s presentation to the 1982 AAA conference, held in Hobart, is a prime example of this. During her address, Langford (1983:2-6) stated that Aboriginal culture belongs to the descendants of that heritage, that it impacts on their present life and it should therefore be theirs to control and share. Langford concluded her discussion by stating that it was time for Aboriginal people and archaeologists to determine the basis of their relationship and begin addressing the inequality which existed.

It has only been in recent years that numerous institutions, organisations, bodies and individuals have begun to acknowledge the many divergent interests concerning Aboriginal heritage.

On an international level the primary rights of indigenous people to their heritage and their participation within its management, have only recently been acknowledged. For example, The Vermillion Accord and the Code of Ethics developed by the World Archaeological Congress in 1989, support the rights of indigenous people to the remains of their past (Greenfield 1995:133; Griffen and Anderson 1992:2).

During the same year the United Nations Draft on the Universal Declaration on Indigenous Rights expressed concern regarding the return to indigenous people of skeletal remains, burial artefacts, and other items of significant cultural property.
The Draft asserted that:

indigenous peoples have the right to the manifestations of their cultures, including archaeological sites, artefacts, designs, technology, and works of art, and the right to manifest, teach, practice, and observe their own religious traditions and ceremonies and to maintain, protect, and have access to sacred sites and burial grounds for these purposes. (Welsh 1992:853).

Within Australia the imbalance is being addressed on numerous levels. In 1991 AAA reviewed their previous Code of Ethics and adopted a new code which placed obligations on Australian archaeologists working in Australia and overseas. Indigenous custodianship and control of their heritage was acknowledged by members in proposing that:

indigenous cultural heritage rightfully belongs to the indigenous descendants of that heritage...(Davidson 1991:61-63).

In accordance with these developments, in 1993 the Council of Australian Museums Associations (CAMA), now known as Museums Australia, adopted the Previous Possessions, New Obligations policy. The policy addressed relations between museums and Australia’s indigenous people. It recognised the many divergent interests in indigenous cultural heritage but emphasised the primary rights of indigenous people to their heritage (Griffen 1996:45). Earlier drafts of this policy states that:

museums can no longer function on the basis that they alone can determine what use is made of cultural material and what access is allowed by indigenous people (Griffen et. al., 1992:6).

The development of legislation and policies indicate attempts to provide a balance between the multiplicity of interests concerning Aboriginal heritage. Within archaeology this is reflected in changes to archaeological practice.
McBryde (1992:262) describes that within archaeology there has been an increase in the awareness of new social and political dimensions involved in discovering and interpreting the past via archaeology. This interpretation is no longer confined within the field of archaeology. It must be shared with indigenous people concerned and interested in research results, often for questions regarding cultural identity and land rights.

Dr. Colin Pardoe, curator of physical anthropology and archaeology at the South Australian Museum is an advocate of accepting Aboriginal interests and participation, and incorporating such principles into professional methodology. Pardoe’s aim has been to construct a model for research which acknowledges Aboriginal interest and control of their heritage without sacrificing the scientific aspect of that research (Pardoe 1990:209).

At the 1995 AAA conference some archaeologists remained concerned that repatriation continued to result in the destruction of excavated materials. In response, the majority of delegates expressed that establishing and maintaining relationships with relevant Aboriginal communities would help in preventing such activity. It was concluded that the overall intention by members would be to pursue collaborative ventures between archaeologists and Aborigines (Ross 1995:5).

In response to similar situations in America, Zimmerman (1989:215) acknowledges that recognising the validity of Native American views might limit access to indigenous material. Despite this, Zimmerman points out that archaeological methods and interpretation are unlikely to alter dramatically.
Failure to conform to the changing environment may result in a greater threat: the total exclusion of access to the remains of the past.

Attitudes are also changing from an Aboriginal perspective. Many Aboriginal people regard the scientific evidence that archaeology produces as irrelevant. Sullivan (1985:149) sums it up well when she states that it does not seem appropriate that the, "main value attributed to sites is their research potential" because for Aboriginal people the importance lies elsewhere. Claims regarding the antiquity of Aborigines is also generally meaningless to Aboriginal people, as they identify their origins with the creation of the world during The Dreaming. There has also been a rejection of archaeological interpretations regarded as damaging to their cause, such as the creation of the myth of The Last Tasmanian (referred to by Bowdler 1983:410).

It has been realised though, that the importance of such information lies in providing acceptable information to people, "whose concept of history is based on a linear system of chronology" (Hubert 1989:156). Mulvaney summarises the situation well when he states that:

(u)nquestioned verities and a spiritual sense of place and heritage do not satisfy the more prosaic latter-day Europeans, whose belief requires a calendar, a map and a quantified data (Bowdler 1983:410).

Some communities are prepared to compromise and accept the retention and study of material. Many acknowledge that scientific research can provide information regarding dietary, medical, and cultural practices. This information is recognised as being beneficial to Aboriginal people, especially for their future generations. Such information can provide evidence of
continuous links through demonstrated spiritual values or ritual practices and valuable information in land claims. Additionally, it is beneficial to the education of Aboriginal people and the wider community and illustrates the dynamic nature of past indigenous life in Australia. For example, the estimated radiocarbon age of about forty thousand years for "Mungo woman", was significant to questions regarding the antiquity and validity of indigenous occupation in Australian (McBryde 1992:262). It is reinforced though, that research should occur in collaboration with, and perhaps under the control of Aboriginal people (Richardson 1989:187).

In 1988 Pardoe, then a research fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies was involved in the investigation of two Aboriginal burials at Cowra in New South Wales. After producing a community report regarding the research and results, permission was sought to date one of the individuals, known as "Taronga Drive man". The Local and Regional Land Councils granted the request. The date of the individual was determined to be in the late 1800s. Despite the contemporary nature of the results, the community regarded them as historically important in demonstrating the continuity of Aboriginal culture into recent times (Pardoe 1990:209).

In a recent article published in the March edition of COMA, Pardoe expressed that we have moved beyond the debate regarding Aboriginal ownership, that it is "no longer an issue" (1996:43). Ownership and control lies unequivocally with the descendants of that heritage.
It is a pleasant and sensible sentiment that Pardoe extends. The sooner archaeologists except Aboriginal ownership and involvement with their heritage, the sooner the profession as a whole can move forward and begin to develop under revised attitudes and practices. The following section examines the changes to archaeological practices as a result of the pressures exerted by Aboriginal involvement.
4.0 Repatriation: its influence on archaeological practices

Repatriation has resulted in exerting new pressures upon archaeology. As mentioned previously, related issues such as ownership and differences in the value attributed to cultural artefacts, coincided with increasing awareness of the social and political aspects linked to interpreting the past. The changing environment has demanded a revision of practices and attitudes within archaeology. It will be demonstrated that community-based, collaborative research has evolved as a direct result of increasing indigenous influence upon archaeology. Furthermore, it will be illustrated that research of this nature has the potential to provide a balance between the divergent interests concerning the archaeological study of Australia's indigenous past.

The collection of Australian indigenous material culture began with contact and continued with the expansion of the colonial frontier. By the 1870s the perception of Aborigines as a dying race influenced systematic collecting by museums whose main objective was to assemble large collections of Aboriginal cultural material (Attwood 1992:viii). Archaeologists began their relationship with museums on an informal level, providing the majority of indigenous cultural artefacts for museum collections and exhibitions. Archaeology as a discipline has evolved over the years, with the most significant changes occurring since its professionalisation in the 1960s (Murray 1992:1).

Throughout the development of archaeology in Australia, the underlying influence has been the manner in which the discipline has perceived, and related to Aboriginal people.
For example, in 1961 the Prehistory Committee at a conference on Aboriginal studies outlined their main aim was the discovery of "the antiquity of man and the development of his culture in Australia" (Murray 1992:5). The perception of Aborigines as a dying race dictated the framework of research, which advocated the study of indigenous cultural material as more productive than fieldwork in Aboriginal communities.

Since the 1970s, archaeology in Australia and overseas has experienced an expansion in the area of cultural resource management. This is attributed to the increase of indigenous interest and participation in their heritage, and the recognition of Aboriginal heritage as representing more than purely archaeological resources, relics, or data (Murray 1992:5-13). For example, Ucko (1983:19) attributes the "staggering change which has occurred in.. professional archaeology" to the recognition by archaeologists of the rights of Aboriginal people to their cultural heritage. Moser (1995:157) concurs that the involvement of Aboriginal people in Australian archaeology has influenced changes in the direction of the discipline. During the 1980s and early 1990s numerous articles addressed the future direction of archaeology as a result of Aboriginal involvement (see for example: H. Allen 1981; Bowdler 1983; Creamer 1989; S. Sullivan 1985; McBryde 1992).

Creamer (1989:130) highlighted the "creative and meaningful interpretations of the past that could result from integrating indigenous beliefs with scientific views". Sullivan (1985:154-155) referred to archaeological work carried out by Sandra Bowdler near Robinvale in Victoria during the early 1980s.
The investigation was carried out at the request of the Aboriginal community who maintained a close involvement throughout the duration of the work. Bowdler has mentioned the rewards of such research numerous times. In 1983 during a keynote address at the XV Pan Pacific Scientific Congress in Dunedin, New Zealand, Bowdler stated that integrated research such as her work at Robinvale, provided benefits and meaning for all involved (Sullivan 1985:155). While, McBryde (1992:265) expressed belief in the necessity for archaeology to develop towards an integrated approach, combining archaeological knowledge with indigenous views.

Increasing interest by indigenous people in their heritage provided the opportunity for the emergence of alternative views to archaeological interpretations of the past. Both in Australia and overseas, the increase in indigenous political autonomy and strength, resulted in archaeology acknowledging the validity of varied indigenous interpretations of their past. Lahn (1996:48) states that

associations with Aborigines have pushed archaeology into new pursuits and new ways of attempting to know the past which incorporates the descendants of archaeological subjects.

For example, the 1991 AAA Code of Ethics outlined that one of the principles was:

to acknowledge and recognise indigenous methodologies for interpreting, curating, managing and protecting indigenous cultural heritage (Davidson 1991:63).
The re-examination of archaeological methodology and interpretation occurred in the late 1980s. In 1989, the World Archaeological Congress held in Southampton addressed these issues and resulted in the following publications by Gathercole and Lowenthal (1989) and Layton (1989).

Both of these publications strongly assert that "archaeological interpretation is a subjective matter" and to regard archaeology as the only legitimate scientific method to interpreting the past needs "re-examination and possibly even rejection" (Gathercole et. al.:xii). Furthermore, at a fundamental level this requires an "acknowledgment that all knowledge is interpretative, that archaeology does not reflect or record knowledge, but rather constructs or produces knowledge" (Attwood 1992:xiv).

Since the mid 1980s the growth of Aboriginal involvement in archaeological research has resulted in Aboriginal people increasingly providing the framework in which archaeologists work. In recent years this has manifested into a distinct movement towards community-based archaeology. Lahn (1996:48) suggests that such "ethical collaborative projects are currently favourable" due to the pressures of repatriation.

Collaborative, community-based archaeological research has featured in numerous articles in recent years (see for example: Sullivan 1985; Lewis and Rose 1985; Pardoe 1990, 1996; Moser 1995; McBryde 1992; Bowdler 1983). Although the term of the research differs slightly from author to author, the nature and objective of the research remains constant.
In general, this type of research entails Aboriginal people collaborating with archaeologists to structure archaeological investigations (Moser 1995:170). The purpose of this research is twofold. Firstly, it attempts to actively involve Aboriginal people in a process that they have been previously alienated by. Secondly, to provide concise information to facilitate an informed opinion regarding the research and the future of similar work.

As mentioned previously, Pardoe is an active participant in developing this type of research. Pardoe believes that producing community reports is a vital component of collaborative research as it allows the scientific aspect of the research to be clearly communicated, enabling the community to assess the work from an informed point of view and participate on an active level. Pardoe (1996:222) concludes by stating that "collaborative assessment places the scientific value of archaeology alongside religious, personal and political considerations, not against them".

The promotion of collaborative research has occurred on a formal level via organisational guidelines and ethics. The AAA has proved to be an important vehicle in these instances. In 1986, a skeletal sub-committee was formed to evaluate the current situation between archaeologists and Aborigines regarding this issue. The committee reported the lack of consultation occurring in this area, and recommended that a program of consultation and liaison with Aboriginal communities be established (Hubert 1989:152).
Following on in 1991 the AAA reviewed their Code of Ethics and outlined the necessity for consultation between archaeologists and appropriate Aboriginal communities.

In regard to archaeological research the code stated that:

Members shall ensure that the authorised representatives of...the indigenous peoples whose culture is being investigated are kept informed during all stages of the investigation and are able to renegotiate or terminate the archaeological work being conducted at that site (Davidson 1991:64).

There are many instances of collaborative research in Australia and overseas. The following examples are distinct in the type of research which was carried out but similar in the nature of the work: comprehensive collaboration between the archaeologist(s) and participating Aboriginal community. It is interesting to note that in many instances the archaeologist(s) takes a somewhat supportive role in conducting the research, while the Aboriginal community instigate and direct the work.

During the early 1980s, Sandra Bowdler was involved in the salvage excavation of burials near Robinvale, on the River Murray in Victoria. The excavation was carried out at the request of the community, who maintained involvement throughout the duration of the investigation. The skeletal material was excavated and documented in the field prior to being reburied. A considerable amount of archaeological information was derived from the investigation. This contributed to establishing the significance of the site and providing local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people with information regarding the site.
Additionally, the site was conserved as part of the Aboriginal heritage of the area, and left in the appropriate condition to enable future research, should the community consider it necessary (Sullivan 1985:154).

The mid-Murray Aboriginal historical sites project involved the cooperation of Aboriginal people from the local area, museum staff, and archaeologists. In 1991 the Aboriginal Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Planning obtained funds from the Murray Darling Basin Commission to conduct a range of site based research projects along the length of the River Murray in South Australia. Steve Hemming (at the time curator in the division of anthropology at the South Australian Museum) was the historical research consultant on project. Archaeological consultant Vivienne Wood supervised the excavation of the Swan Reach Aboriginal Mission site, with assistance by volunteers from Adelaide universities and local residents. Recordings of oral histories related to the site were also part of the project. The information and artefacts discovered are intended to be utilised in a planned regional Aboriginal interpretation centre at Devon Downs, and incorporated into an exhibition concerning the former mission site at Swan Reach (Hemming 1994:43).

The publication of *The Murray Darling Basin Aboriginal Heritage Handbooks* (1995) are not archaeological research as such, but they require a mention as the information they contain can facilitate collaborative research.
The handbooks by archaeologist and physical anthropologist, Jeannette Hope and Judith Littleton respectively, are designed to provide practical information about heritage and conservation for Aboriginal people and communities in the Murray-Darling Basin region. Although the publications relate to skeletal material and therefore are more relevant to anthropology, they aim to involve and educate Aboriginal people in the process of discovering and protecting their heritage. Thereby illustrating the desire to increase Aboriginal knowledge of, and participation in archaeological research. The authors have plans to produce other publications in this format, concerning archaeological consultants’ and community reports.

The response by American archaeology is similar, with many States, organisations and institutions establishing consultative bodies with local Native American and Hawaiian communities. The objective has been to discuss and negotiate research, while several have developed relevant policies and guidelines. In 1987, The Society of Professional Archaeologists included within their guidelines the necessity for consultation between their members and America’s indigenous inhabitants (Hubert 1989:141).

Since 1990 this process has been facilitated by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The primary purpose of the Act is:

Despite the primary focus on protection, the Act has facilitated increasing consultation and communication between indigenous groups and archaeologists (Blancke and Slow Turtle 1995:6).

Concerns by the archaeology community exist regarding Aboriginal involvement in archaeological research. Some of the concerns which have emerged include, fear of exclusion, lack of research opportunity, and censorship of interpretations deemed inappropriate by Aborigines (Frankel 1985:14; Sullivan 1985:153). With the exception of a few instances (such as the return of the Kow Swamp remains, and the La Trobe University and Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (TALC) dispute) archaeologists have not been severely hampered by Aboriginal involvement, and it has not resulted in the end nor the cessation of archaeology in Australia (Moser 1995:169).

A recent concern has been the possibility of archaeologists utilising Aboriginal involvement to authorise and validate their studies (Lahn 1996:48). There is always the apprehension that Aboriginal participation will not be applied in the appropriate manner. Such a statement implies that Aboriginal people may not be assertive enough to ensure this would not happen. Aboriginal people are becoming increasingly scrupulous in their professional dealing with archaeologists. More and more Aborigines are beginning to use archaeology, rather than be used by it.
The selective use of archaeological information by Aborigines illustrates this point. Archaeological dates for human occupation in Australia directly conflicts with the beliefs of many Aborigines, who regard their existence in this country as occurring since time immemorial. Despite this, archaeological evidence is used by Aboriginal people, for example, to support notions of antiquity. This selective use of archaeological data by Aboriginal people occurs as a result of their interaction with non-Aboriginal Australians who value archaeological evidence more highly than Aboriginal beliefs. Davidson (1991:253) identifies “this selective use of the results of archaeology...as one that serves the interests of the people who adopt new notions”.

The potential benefits that can be derived from collaborative research outweigh the concerns expressed previously. Archaeological information can be utilised by Aboriginal people in numerous ways. As a western science, archaeology is considered by many in society to be a reliable interpretation of past events. Subsequently, archaeological information can be used as evidence by Aboriginal people in processes such as land claims and repatriation requests. Additionally, obtaining dates from excavated material can validate claims of antiquity and cultural continuity. The discovery, in 1988 of an Aboriginal burial dated between one hundred and one hundred and fifty years in Cowra, New South Wales was regarded by many within the community, as more significant than the discovery of Mungo woman. Mrs Agnes Coe, a local community member commented that this individual was important as it “showed the continuity of Aboriginal culture existing into the late 1800s” (Pardoe 1988:209).
At times, excavating can result in the discovery of cultural material. Although such finds can be an emotional experience they provide a powerful, symbolic representation of the past. If cultural material is retained in the community it can be an important educational tool. For instance, the occasional use of an artefact or its display in a community museum, keeping place or alternative option, is vital in the education or re-education of community members, especially children.

Cultural education can be extended to non-Aborigines in the wider community. Cultural museums or displays of cultural artefacts in local or regional centres can provide information, generally inaccessible to local people. Brambuk Cultural Centre at the Grampians in Victoria, is an excellent example of this. The centre provides information regarding the Jardwadjali and Djap Wurrung in a regional setting. Visitors can see displays re-counting the history of the indigenous people of the area, visit sites and participate in ceremonies which include some of the artefacts on display.

For archaeologists, continual collaboration with Aboriginal community members can provide access to important resources. No amount of research can account for knowledge accumulated over years of living in an area. Additionally, indigenous interpretation of past events can add a new dimension to an archaeologists understanding, and therefore interpretation of a site. For instance, Aboriginal input into the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Sites of Significance Recording Program resulted in changes to the recording of Aboriginal sites.
Emphasis shifted from recording visible ‘traditional’ and prehistoric sites to sites that were regarded as sacred or significant by Aboriginal people (Moser 1995:162).

Pardoe's work along the central River Murray (see for example: 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996) illustrates the benefits of establishing and maintaining relationships with Aboriginal communities. Pardoe’s research in this area has involved recording cemeteries, graves, living sites, stone sources and studying skeletal remains from the area which are housed in the Museum. Members of local Aboriginal communities have viewed the remains and expressed their views regarding their future. Many want the remains returned for reburial but also want further research conducted to contribute to their knowledge. This collaborative relationship has resulted in a three year research plan, which involves the excavation of an Aboriginal cemetery, study of uncovered remains and grave goods, and radiocarbon dating of the discovered cultural material (Pardoe 1996:43-44).

In America, the rewards of collaborative research is also being experienced. Increased awareness and sensitivity on the part of archaeologists to Native sacred issues, has been responded with increased tolerance by Native Americans of archaeological processes and interpretations (Blancke et. al., 1995:7). In many cases the result has been the construction of archaeological research that serves the interests and purpose of both parties.
The increase in Aboriginal interest in their heritage has not solely focused upon the field of archaeology. Museums, the institutions who house the majority of collected Aboriginal material culture in Australia, have been included in this appraisal. Similar to archaeology, museums have recognised the benefits of collaborative research, encouraging the development of such research between staff and relevant indigenous communities.

In the past, museums have been regarded as institutions of authority in the representation of other societies. The illusion of adequately representing a group, society, or culture has been achieved by removing cultural artefacts from their original context and presenting them as representation of a complete picture. This is produced via the collection, classification and display of cultural artefacts (Clifford 1985:238). Like many indigenous cultures, Australian Aboriginal society has been severely misrepresented by museums. This is illustrated by the common misconception that the 'returning' boomerang, a common feature in many museums, was a tool used by all Aboriginal groups. When in reality Aboriginal groups from the Northern Territory did not use 'returning' boomerangs (Anderson and Jones 1992:4).

In the last ten years museums have experienced more fundamental changes than ever before in their history. They have become public institutions, whose actions are scrutinised by all sectors of the community (Specht and MacLulich 1996:27). The 1978 UNESCO Regional seminar held in Adelaide provided the first significant opportunity for indigenous Australians to comment on museums' portrayal and role regarding the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Since this time Aborigines have been attempting to increase their
control over management, care and presentation of their cultural heritage (Specht et. al., 1996:29). The outcome parallels the situation experienced by archaeologists - the movement towards collaborative relationships with Aborigines.

The museum community has expressed concern over Aboriginal involvement in museum activities. In a similar vein to those expressed by archaeologists, museum staff are apprehensive that increased Aboriginal involvement could result in a reduction, removal, or loss of collections and thereby a potential loss of access to these collections (Griffen 1996:50).

Despite this, for many years there has been encouragement and an increase in collaboration between museum staff and Aborigines. At the 1995 AAA conference held in Gatton Queensland, Jim Specht from the Australian Museum promoted the benefits of collaborative relations. In many cases it clarified the role of the Museum and resulted in informed decisions regarding the future of cultural artefacts. In some instances, communities, due to the fragile nature of their cultural material decided to retain the objects in the Museum (Ross 1995:5).

The adoption of the Previous Possessions, New Obligations Policy by Museums Australia in 1993, provides another example of the encouragement of collaborative research. This policy attempts to address all aspects of museums' involvement with the cultural heritage of indigenous people.

The policy states that Aboriginal communities must be consulted on all aspects of proposed research which concerns their heritage (Griffen 1995:53).
The South Australian Museum has a long history of promoting collaborative research. The objective is to "establish on-going social relationships with Aboriginal communities and allow Aboriginal people a significant say in the management of material vitally important to them" (Anderson 1990a:122, 1990b:174).

Colin Pardoe (curator of physical anthropology and archaeology at the South Australian Museum) conducts his research in accordance with this objective. Pardoe (1996:43) contends that it is not enough for Aboriginal people to be informed of the museum’s collections. He believes there needs to be an exchange of knowledge which is dictated by the nature of the collection. This includes communicating to Aboriginal communities the scientific value of the research, so when a decision is made regarding the future of cultural material in the Museum, it is made with the fullest consideration of all views.

In America, museums have been responding along similar lines with numerous examples of attempts to facilitate collaborative relationships between museum staff and Native Americans. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) requires all federally funded institutions housing indigenous American material to inventory all human remains, associated grave goods, and other cultural materials, and to notify Native American tribes of that information. Additionally, groups such as the American Indian Museum Association encourage collaboration between museum staff and Native Americans in the use and interpretations of collections (Tivy 1993:25).
Likewise in Canada, the formation of a task force between the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association resulted in a report titled *Turning the page: forging new relationships between museums and first people.* This report acknowledged the commonality of interests in indigenous culture and advocated for indigenous involvement in all aspects of museum management regarding their heritage (Griffen 1996:47).

Throughout the last 30 years Aboriginal involvement has exerted a significant influence upon the development of archaeology in Australia. This influence, which has been extended numerous ways over the years, has recently been exerted via repatriation requests. Repatriation has highlighted the varied and distinct interests in Aboriginal heritage. In many instances repatriation requests require the establishment of working relationships between archaeologists, museums, and Aboriginal communities. The additional encouragement by organisational guidelines, policies, and codes of ethics has manifested in movements towards collaborative, community-based archaeological research.

Collaborative, community-based research has been an interesting change in direction for archaeology in Australia. Despite some concerns, the potential benefits which can be gained from this type of research are many.

The importance of collaborative research though, lies in its capability to provide for the multiplicity of interests concerned with the archaeological research of Australia's indigenous heritage.
5.0 The Viability of Repatriation

Repatriation is an extremely contentious issue, that involves many emotions and motives. In recent years it has become an issue that archaeologists are increasingly exposed to. The objective of this discussion is to examine the viability of repatriation and to gain an understanding of potential repercussions experienced by archaeologists, museums, and Aboriginal people involved in repatriation processes. Relevant legislation, policies, and guidelines are investigated to enable a discussion of whether they are conducive to the protection and return of cultural artefacts. This will be followed by examining whether viable alternatives to repatriation exist - or is there no realistic alternative?

Requests for repatriation from Aboriginal communities can be identified as primarily related to increasing access to their cultural heritage. The inherent problems Aborigines currently experience is mentioned in the previous section and has been discussed extensively by Fourmile (see for example: 1988, 1989, 1992, 1996). Underlying the motives of repatriation requests are political objectives which fulfil larger goals such as self determination and the exertion of control over their present and future existence (Fourmile 1989, 1992; Yellow-Bird and Milun 1992:20; Tivy 1993:25). Langford (1983:2) epitomises this point in stating that:

it is our past, our culture and heritage and forms part of our present life. As such it is ours to control...
Repatriation enables Aboriginal people to gain access to cultural artefacts with which they have an association. Cultural artefacts can be described as embodiments of a society’s spirituality, history, continuity, and identity. Although an artefact may have been produced by an individual, or individuals within a society, it retains collective importance through the process of symbolism (Greenfield 1995:300).

The removal of artefacts from indigenous groups, a common practice since non-Aboriginal arrival in Australia, has been identified as significantly contributing to the loss of Aboriginal cultural knowledge (Fourmile 1992:3, 1996:10). It is not surprising therefore, that cultural artefacts are valued for their educational and religious significance. The re-introduction of cultural artefacts into a community can result in the re-emergence of forgotten cultural practices. Whilst the display of cultural artefacts, their use in ceremonies or other cultural practices is instrumental in the education of community members, especially children.

Perhaps one of the most constructive aspects of repatriation is that in some instances it results in the establishment of cultural museums, keeping places or other alternatives. The return and storage of cultural artefacts in local institutions, for example can play a significant role in Aboriginal movements towards self-determination and regaining control of their heritage (Anderson 1988:24).
For example, Camp Coorong is a Ngarrindjeri community initiative that comprises a cultural education centre located two hundred kilometres southeast of Adelaide. The focal point of the complex is the cultural museum which displays a small but significant collection of Ngarrindjeri artefacts. The display includes information about Ngarrindjeri family and social history, spirituality, places of significance, and arts and crafts (Hemming 1993:39). The facility is visited regularly by primary, secondary and tertiary groups, along with tourists and people from regional areas.

The innovative development of keeping places and cultural museums occurred in the early 1980s. The Shepparton Keeping Place in Victoria was perhaps one of the first well known facilities of this type. Since this time it has become an issue that has attracted much debate (for example see: Mulvaney 1981, 1991; Sculthorpe 1985; Fourmile 1988, 1996; Sampson 1988; Anderson 1988; Bolton 1988; Vanderwal 1988; Richardson 1989). The majority of concerns have come from within the museum community who, whilst supporting the idea, express concern regarding the conservation and preservation of cultural artefacts housed in these facilities. This may further reflect a concern over diminished control and reduced regulatory power of the established museum institutions.

Despite these concerns, support for cultural museums continues to be expressed by Aboriginal people. Richardson (1989:187) describes the importance of such facilities in allowing Aboriginal people to monitor the types of research being conducted and relaying the results of research directly to the community.
While Fourmile (1988:27, 1996:11) contends that "culturally autonomous places" enable Aborigines to celebrate their cultural and artistic achievements, share their heritage on their terms, and recognises Aboriginal rights to self determination.

For Aboriginal people repatriation can potentially increase access to cultural artefacts. This in turn facilitates education, and the emergence and continuation of cultural practices. Additionally, it can serve to promote a wider range of community initiatives such as the establishment of cultural museums, keeping places, and interpretive centres. All of these benefits contribute to a growing expression of spiritual beliefs and strengthening of cultural identity (Sackler et al., 1992:61).

Aboriginal people are beginning to re-adopt the perception that the "past should serve the present". Subsequently, Aborigines are utilising the past for their present political needs and objectives (Creamer 1989:136). Repatriation serves to facilitate some of these political objectives. It fundamentally contributes to the continuation of cultural knowledge and to achieving self determination. Aboriginal people also express concern that the present situation can only result in their "continued cultural dispossession" (Fourmile 1996:10). Repatriation can therefore allow renewed access to cultural artefacts that are regarded as being instrumental in re-establishing important links with their past and in dictating the direction of their collective future. In Queensland, the Gurung Land Council's request for the repatriation of 92 engraved sandstone blocks illustrates this view.
Repatriation is one of many community initiatives that includes linguistics, language revitalisation studies, studies of contemporary social landscapes, ecological knowledge, in addition to research and management studies of archaeological sites and landscapes in the region associated with the Gooreng Community (Ulm and Lilley 1995:3-4). For the Gurung Land Council the repatriation request form part of a larger objective which involves increasing community knowledge and access to cultural heritage, thereby asserting control over their future.

Museums have been actively involved in facilitating and supervising repatriation requests for many years. The Australian Museum has been repatriating cultural material from the human biology collection for some fifteen years, while the South Australian Museum has been returning both skeletal material and cultural artefacts to Aboriginal communities since the early 1980s (Specht et al., 1996:35; Anderson 1990b:172).

Within museums, repatriation appears to be considered beneficial when it results in the establishment of interactive relationships between museum staff and the Aboriginal community concerned. If the relationship between the two parties remains congenial other benefits are experienced. These include expanding the museums' knowledge of collections, updating the collections with contemporary artefacts, and creating opportunities for further research (Ross 1995:5; Anderson 1990b:173; Pardoe 1996:42; Hemming 1994a:41).
An example of the benefits that can result from the establishment of positive relationships during repatriation processes is illustrated by a case at the South Australian Museum. In 1982 the Warlpiri and Anmatyerre communities from Central Australia requested the return of sacred cultural artefacts housed in the South Australian Museum. Numerous years of consultation, investigation, discussion and negotiation resulted in the transfer of some forty cultural artefacts to the communities in April of 1986.

From the initial request by the Warlpiri and Anmatyerre, a positive relationship evolved that resulted in the development of other mutual benefits. For instance, Aboriginal elders allowed previously restricted cultural artefacts to be exhibited and used in museum research. The Museum assisted with marketing the communities’ contemporary arts and crafts, and a joint exhibition of contemporary acrylic art was established within the Museum (Anderson 1990b:173).

Repatriation generally requires the museum to inform the particular Aboriginal community that has made a request of the cultural artefacts held in the museum that relates to them. Compiling such information can contribute to placing the collection in context and increasing the cultural and research value of the collection.

For instance, the mid-Murray Aboriginal historical sites project was a collaborative effort with the South Australian Museum that demonstrates such benefits.
The aim of the project was to record historical Aboriginal sites and document the Aboriginal history of the River Murray from Blanchetown south to Mannum, in South Australia (Hemming 1994b:66). One of the primary objectives of the Aboriginal community was to assemble cultural artefacts to be utilised in the development of cultural tourism in the region. Steve Hemming, the historical researcher on the project describes this type of research as:

beneficial for Aboriginal people and invaluable in improving the standards of museum based research and enabling the Museum to take a more sophisticated approach to interpreting the collection. (Hemming 1994b:67).

Repatriation processes in which negotiation between the two parties is amicable can result in the establishment of other alternative options such as the formerly mentioned keeping places, cultural centres, and local museums. In many cases the museum acts in an advisory capacity supplying information regarding storage, handling and display. this practice assists to ensure that continued preservation of the cultural artefacts is maintained and establishes opportunities for future research (Specht et. al., 1995:35).

The negative aspects related to repatriation processes are few. They often typically emerge as a result of conflict and are both evident and justifiable. For instance, many museum staff fear that repatriation will result in a total reduction, removal, or loss of collections and thereby a potential loss of access to those collections. Many regard the collections housed in museums as "universal culture" that should be accessible to all people (Wilson 1985:101; Mulvaney 1985:89).
Furthermore, that it is the museum’s role to "celebrate the achievements of a common heritage, of diversity and to acknowledge shared human problems" (Jones 1996:21).

To date, a total loss of museum collections has not occurred. Griffen (1996:50) states that in countries such as North America, New Zealand and Australia he is not aware of any repatriation cases that have resulted in the "stripping of museum collections". Furthermore, Christopher Anderson (an anthropologist, who is the current director of the South Australian Museum) acknowledges that although the repatriation of cultural material can result in a loss of research resources, in many cases it opens up a dialogue between the two parties, which can lead to increased knowledge concerning other items within the museum collection and create opportunities for further research (1990a:122).

Within archaeology, the attitude towards the viability of repatriation is viewed in a similar manner to that of museum staff. This can be attributed to the fact that the majority of people working within these professions are generally influenced by western scientific values. The conflict underlying repatriation in regard to Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people with a western scientific education is further discussed in the previous section.

Within the archaeological profession the negative connotations associated with repatriation are similar to those expressed by Museum staff. The majority of archaeologists are opposed to repatriation because it represents a relinquishment of control over cultural material.
Subsequently, many feel that it will result in loss of access to research materials and their possible destruction via reburial or similar activities (Frankel 1984:15).

These concerns have also proven justifiable to an extent, with some repatriation cases demonstrating these negatives only too well. The most recent example is the dispute between La Trobe University and TALC. This very public debate concerned Aboriginal cultural artefacts excavated from sites in southwestern Tasmania. The dispute resulted in La Trobe University archaeologists losing access to research data before they had completed their analyses. The whole case resulted in strained relations between some archaeologists from La Trobe and members of TALC. The situation increased the existing negative feelings towards repatriation and caused considerable debate and divisions within the archaeological community (Ross 1995:5).

Despite this there are positive aspects for repatriation. Due to the affects felt within the profession after the La Trobe University, TALC dispute, the organising committee at the 1995 AAA conference decided to include a 'repatriation debate' session. Some archaeologists continued to express their concern that repatriation generally resulted in the destruction of excavated materials. In response, the majority of delegates agreed that establishing and maintaining relationships with relevant Aboriginal communities would help in preventing such activity in the future.
It was concluded that the overall intention by members would be to pursue collaborative ventures between archaeologists and Aborigines to ensure that the La Trobe University, TALC dispute became viewed as a rare occurrence (Ross 1995:5).

This final point is of vital significance. Despite some of the few negative aspects to repatriation, it is increasingly being viewed by archaeologists as having potential benefits. For instance, repatriation had resulted in increasing the "level of information exchange now existing between Aboriginal owners of heritage and researchers" (Ross 1995:5). This has contributed to the emergence of community-based collaborative research. The benefits archaeologists experience from this type of investigation are explored more fully in the previous section.

In America, archaeologists are also experiencing the benefits of repatriation. An example is the recent activities of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, a society of amateur and professional archaeologists. In 1992 the Society offered to repatriate Native remains and invited members of the local Wampanoag community to discuss plans for a new museum. The relationship initially established through repatriation has provided rewards for both parties. Joint exhibitions held at Native pow-wows and other events, and the commitment on the part of the Society to discuss the return of sensitive cultural material after cataloguing illustrate the beneficial aspects that flow from repatriation (Blanck et. al., 1995:6).
In Australia, the protection of Aboriginal cultural artefacts is undertaken via Federal and State legislation. In regard to repatriation, with the exception of the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986, no legislation exists to facilitate this process. Rather organisational guidelines and codes encourage, and in some instances insist, on the establishment of relationships between Aborigines and non-Aboriginal people with a common interest in indigenous heritage. The establishment of such relationships can potentially result in negotiations regarding the repatriation of particular artefacts.

Legislation to protect Aboriginal sites and portable items developed relatively late in Australia's legislative history. The individual States are largely responsible for the development of legislation concerning the environment, heritage, and planning. The 1967 constitutional referendum granted the Federal government power to legislate for Aboriginal affairs in the States. The result has been the development of legislation at both levels.

The Northern Territory, Native and Historic Objects and Areas Preservation Ordinance 1955-1960, is the earliest example of legislation aimed at protecting Aboriginal cultural artefacts and places. Acts in other States promptly followed with South Australia in 1965, Queensland and New South Wales two years later in 1967, Western Australia and Victoria in 1972, and finally Tasmania in 1975 (Boyd and Ward 1993: 106). The legislation developed during this period was to provide protection for Aboriginal 'relics' considered to be of sole archaeological importance. This bias can be attributed to the influence exerted by archaeologists concerned with the threat of damage and loss of sites and artefacts (Flood 1989:80).
In recent years these Acts have been amended or replaced by legislation that recognises Aboriginal significance in their heritage. The Northern Territory’s Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act was one of the first of this type, followed by the South Australian Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (Boyd et al. 1993:107). For instance, under section 13(2) of the Heritage Act the Minister must consult with the appropriate Aboriginal people and consider their views and interpretations:

When determining whether an area of land is an Aboriginal site or an object is an Aboriginal object, the Minister must accept the views of the traditional owners of the land or object on the question of whether the land or object is of significance according to Aboriginal tradition. (Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988:9).

On a federal level, there are two Acts in particular that provide protection where State legislation may not, while also acknowledging the validity of Aboriginal participation in such processes. The Australian Heritage Commission Act (1975) established a Register of the National Estate, and provides indirect protection against the actions of State governments. Secondly, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act (1984-1986) assigns protection to places and artefacts of particular significance to Australia’s indigenous people in accordance with their traditions. It is designed to take direct and effective action where significant sites or artefacts are under threat and where state or territory laws are lacking or not enforced (Flood 1989:82).

Although no legislation exists in Australia that relates directly to the repatriation of cultural artefacts to the determined descendants of that heritage, there are organisational policies and codes that to varying degrees, actually facilitate repatriation. The Previous Possessions, New Obligations Policy
adopted in 1993 by Museums Australia provides an excellent example. The policy requests museums to consider all applications for the return of cultural material. In regard to the repatriation of skeletal material, the policy rejects claims by museums to retain such material based solely upon claims of scientific value (Griffen 1996:52-54).

The South Australian Museum does not have a "blanket policy" in regard to repatriation, it prefers to consider each request on a case by case basis. Anderson (1990b:174) contends that the lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities is one of the major reasons for museums receiving repatriation requests. It is, therefore, the Museum's objective to inform Aboriginal communities of material in the collection that relates to them and:

offer ..a real say in what happens to the material, discussing both the options of return and reburial and local 'keeping places'.
(Anderson 1990b:174).

The AAA has attempted to represent the needs of archaeologists, while recognising the rights of Aboriginal people. For instance, from the early 1980s it recognised and encouraged members to actively consult with Aboriginal people in all aspects of archaeological research. Additionally, the Association announced its support for the return of Aboriginal 'skeletal' remains of known individuals to the appropriate Aboriginal community. However, the Association stated that although they recognised the significance of cultural material to Aborigines, they expressed the significance of this heritage to all humans (Mulvaney 1991:16).
In recent years the Association has continued to encourage the involvement of Aboriginal people in all areas of archaeological research. At the 1995 Annual General Meeting it was stated that:

the majority of members do favour repatriation of any archaeological material; that involvement of indigenous owners of sites should be an ongoing process throughout all stages of archaeological research; and that material to be repatriated should be adequately analysed prior to hand-back. (Australian Archaeology 1996:60).

Despite the absence of repatriation legislation or alternative organisational policies or codes, the return of cultural material to Aboriginal people has occurred. Challenging State legislation, for example, has resulted in the return of the Kow Swamp remains and cultural artefacts from La Trobe University. The Kow Swamp remains were returned after James Berg, the Inspector under the Victorian Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972, successfully challenged the rights of others to have control of Aboriginal cultural remains. The cultural artefacts from La Trobe University were ordered to be returned to Tasmania during litigation proceedings in the Federal court by the Minister, Mr John Cleary, who was responsible for administering the Tasmanian Aboriginal Relics Act 1975 (Auty 1995:20).

The lack of policies or guidelines have not prevented museums or archaeologists facilitating repatriation. Both the Australian Museum and the South Australian Museum have a long history of repatriation, as mentioned previously. Their institutional policies of establishing active and continuous relationships with Aboriginal communities interested in the museum's collections has undoubtedly facilitated further requests for the return of cultural material. For archaeologists, the encouragement and endorsement of
the AAA to consult with relevant Aboriginal people in regard to archaeological research has occasionally resulted in the return of excavated materials. The fieldwork conducted by Bowdler in Robinvale and by Pardoe in Cowra, discussed earlier clearly illustrates this point.

Protection of Aboriginal heritage is reasonably adequate with legislation operating at the Federal and State levels. Difficulties do arise, however, due to the variation in the provisions and administration of the Acts from State to State and Territory. This is most evident in cases where State boundaries are crossed such as in the La Trobe University and TALC dispute.

In regard to repatriation, institutions and organisations encourage repatriation to varying degrees. Although, calls for the establishment of uniform State, or national cultural heritage legislation have been recorded (Auty 1995:20). There has not been a particularly strong push for repatriation legislation at a State or federal level comparable to that in America. The development of policies and codes can be interpreted as attempts to provide adequate avenues for repatriation, thereby avoiding the implementation of such legislation.

In some instances communities decide on an alternative option to repatriation. Two of the most frequently chosen alternatives are re-institution or establishing long term loans of cultural material.

Re-institution allows museums to maintain a special relationship with groups who take this course of action. Anderson (1990c:55) describes the practice as an extension of the museum’s social relationship with Aboriginal groups and individuals. For Aborigines, retaining the artefacts within the museum is
generally the preferred option due to the lack of appropriate repository facilities elsewhere. The duration of re-institution may vary, but it is a viable option that can serve the interests of both Aborigines and museums.

The construction of a special store room in the South Australian Museum is an excellent example of an alternative option to repatriation. The store, the size of two large rooms, contains sacred cultural material. It is completely sealed and protected by a halon gas system. Access to the room is restricted to particular people, such as initiated Aboriginal men with rights to the collection, the curator responsible for the collection and other authorised. The cultural material is stored in such a manner, that when objects are being viewed, other artefacts in the store cannot be seen. This room has been used continually since it was established, especially by Central Australian groups (Anderson 1992:12; Mulvaney 1991:20).

In other circumstances long term loans, rather than outright returns are negotiated. The indigenous owners gain access to their cultural heritage and the museum contributes to the maintenance of the artefacts on loan (Specht et. al., 1996:35). For example, the Australian Museum through negotiations with Aboriginal communities in New South Wales and Queensland have set up long term loans. While the South Australian Museum as mentioned previously have loaned out cultural artefacts to the cultural museum at Camp Coorong, in South Australia.

In other instances distance hampers repatriation discussion, so material is returned to appropriately located facilities. In 1994 the Australian Museum
returned archaeological material from the Northern Territory to the Northern Territory Museum and Art Gallery in Darwin. It was felt that the Northern Territory Museum was in a better situation to discuss with local community members what to do with the material (Specht et al., 1996:35).

It has been pointed out by Professor Gould that the 'tides of history' previously favoured the removal of many cultural treasures from their indigenous homeland. It appears that (with the passing of time) the 'tides of history' have changed and now favour return (Greenfield 1995:298).

Repatriation is a process that undoubtedly has its disadvantages and advantages. For museum staff and archaeologists it is generally associated with the subsequent destruction of data. It has been demonstrated though that the establishment of amicable relationships and consultation with Aboriginal communities involved has potential benefits. In some instances material is retained in such a manner that allows future research should opportunities arise.

For Aboriginal people repatriation is a process that, although it is not enforced by legislation, is encouraged by many institutions and organisations through policies and codes of ethics. Alternatives to repatriation do exist and are being explored. They provide Aboriginal people with access to their heritage and overcome some of the problems archaeologists and museum staff associate with repatriation. On a larger scale there is no alternative that can truly provide for the greater needs of Aboriginal people as repatriation appears to. Repatriation
is part of a larger process that contributes towards political objectives such as self-determination and exerting control over their past, present, and future.
6.0 Discussion

The objective of this thesis was to explore and examine the repatriation of Aboriginal cultural artefacts in Australia and South Australia. The first section, 2.0 examined a museum collection of Aboriginal cultural artefacts housed in the South Australian Museum. The collection, from the Riverland region in South Australia was chosen, not because of desires to return the material, but rather due to its representing the majority of collections in the South Australian Museum. Thereby allowing a more realistic understanding of repatriation and its potential benefits.

Section 3.0 identified, the question of ownership, and the difference in the value attributed to cultural material, as the two major issues underlying the conflict associated with repatriation. These differences can be related to a fundamental difference in world views which result in people with a western, scientific education generally placing greater value on the educational and scientific aspect of repatriated material. While, the majority of indigenous people place greater importance on the cultural and religious aspects of their heritage. This conflict has been further aggravated by the tendency over the years, to attribute greater weight to the concerns of the scientific community over those of Aboriginal people.

However in recent years there have been attempts to correct this imbalance. Section 4.0 illustrates the attempts by archaeologists, museum staff, and Aboriginal people to move beyond the conflict, and structure research that can provide for the multiplicity of interests concerning Aboriginal heritage.
Community-based, collaborative research has been the outcome. Encouraged by legislation, and organisational guidelines and policies, this type of research is developing and influencing the direction of Aboriginal archaeological research in Australia.

The last section, 5.0 examined the viability of repatriation from a theoretical perspective. The negative connotations associated with repatriation are justifiable, but also rare. Many more instances exist which demonstrate that repatriation can provide benefits for all groups involved in such processes.

The transfer of objects from collections or excavations should not be viewed as diminishing research resources. Repatriation has the potential to establish continuous relationships between indigenous groups, museums and archaeologists, and create alternative resources previously unknown or inaccessible to archaeologists, museum staff and Aboriginal people.

The cooperation and consultation that repatriation creates can result in conclusive research that benefits all involved.

It is important to express concern over the future of material which forms the basis of our profession. Having access to this material is fundamental for research and to contributing to interpreting a past yet fully understood. Archaeology must operate within the boundaries marked by society, within which Aboriginal people are active participants. Contributing to past history is important, but it should not hamper the aspirations of a group who are attempting to achieve what many in Australia exercise without too much forethought, the right to determine, to express who you are.
It is a unrelenting demand with which archaeologists must conduct their profession, but it will perhaps enrich our interpretations and thereby our collective past, present, and future.

The only real world for you and me is the present, and while we may create a reality which we call the past it is only our reality, it is the story we tell; or the story that someone who did exist in the past has told and managed to read (Willmot, 1985, 41)
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Acknowledgments...

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Di Smith, Deanne Hanchant, Colin Pardoe, Donald Pate, Terry Lenehan, the Kers, and for the maps and everything else under the sun, Matthew Buchanan.