

ABORIGINAL LEADERS TO HOLD PROTEST AT LONDON'S NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM 11.30am FRIDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2007

Clyde Mansell, Chairman of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Lands Council and Bob Weatherall, Chairman of the Brisbane-based Centre for Indigenous Cultural Policy, will be holding a public protest on the steps to the entrance of the Natural History Museum in London tomorrow morning.

The Aboriginal leaders are protesting against what Bob Weatherall termed "the faceless committee of the Natural History Museum who won't even show themselves in court, who now want to carry out additional barbaric scientific experiments on Aboriginal human remains without the consent of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community".

Clyde Mansell added that the ancestral remains of the Tasmanian Aboriginals are not being treated with dignity and respect, nor "the due process that would be afforded anybody here in the UK".

Clyde Mansell and Bob Weatherall will be demanding the immediate return of all Aboriginal remains held in British institutions. They refer to the 2000 agreement between British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Australian Prime Minister John Howard, which was to expedite the return of Aboriginal remains held in UK museums and other institutions.

The Aboriginal leaders have requested a meeting with both Tony Blair and Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell but have not yet had a response.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is taking legal action in the British High Court regarding the return of the Natural History Museum's collection of Aboriginal remains. Their UK legal representative, Mark Stephens and Pia Sarma, will also be attending the protest. Today's High Court hearing was adjourned until 7-9 March to allow the judge to consider all the evidence.

Tomorrow's protest will be taking place at 11.30am on the entrance steps of the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd, London SW7 5BD.

Press enquiries

Clyde Mansell +61 429 312 833 (Australian mobile number)
Bob Weatherall 07968 844 142 (UK mobile number)
Both men are staying at the Holiday Inn Regent's Park
Ph: + 44 (0) 8704009111, Fax: + 44 (0) 2073872806

Press release prepared by:

Gill Watson

Coordinator, European Network for Indigenous Australian Rights
07949 422 672 (UK)