



This spread

Spears, clubs and boomerangs from the Morrison collection. Photos Stuart Humphreys.

Far right

Wonnarua man Laurie Perry. Photo Finton Mahoney.

the **BOOMERANGS RETURN**

*reinvigorating
Wonnarua culture*

A COLLECTION OF ABORIGINAL ARTEFACTS DATING TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IS A RECENT ADDITION TO THE MUSEUM'S 'VIRTUAL' COLLECTIONS.





People from the Wonnarua nation, in the Singleton area of the Hunter Valley (NSW), have maintained a strong sense of cultural identity despite the impact of European settlement on their traditional lands and culture.

And they're continuing to reinvigorate their traditional culture, says Wonnarua man Laurie Perry.

'Well, at the moment, the Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation ... we have actually developed the Reclamation Committee to look at getting our information back and putting it onto our website', Laurie said.

BOOMERANGS

Of particular interest is a collection of 124 Aboriginal cultural objects put together by Alexander Morrison, a publisher and collector in Singleton, between 1893 and 1910.

'Seeing the objects today gave me a great sense of ownership; the collection to me is very important to our people', said Laurie.

Morrison occasionally employed people in his printing works from nearby St Clair Mission, which was established in 1893 as a mission for the displaced Wonnarua people.

Many of the objects in this collection were made for Morrison by Wonnarua people at the mission.

'A part of the collection comes from the St Clair area and other parts are from other areas around Australia', said Laurie.

'The St Clair Mission is important to the Wonnarua people. It's a belt of land that we own just on the outskirts of Singleton in Carrowbrook.

'To me the collection signifies that there is a greater understanding between the Aboriginal people, the traditional owners, the Wonnarua people of the area.'

The corporation is also developing a master plan that will see a cultural park created at the old mission site for interpreting Wonnarua culture, language and history.

'We're looking at working in partnership with the Australian Museum to reclaim our culture and heritage and our history.'

ACCESS

Providing access to the collections is one way in which the Museum supports the Wonnarua people and other cultural groups in meeting their aspirations.

'The Morrison collection is important because it shows that Indigenous people were prepared to participate in the wider economy, making and selling cultural artefacts', said Phil Gordon, Indigenous Collections Coordinator.

'The Museum has always provided access to the collection for those who want it and now of course we're making greater use of the internet.

'With the approval of Wonnarua representatives, we've photographed the entire Morrison collection and made it available online.



'It's a great way for people to access these objects because we just don't have the physical space to display more than a tiny fraction of the cultural collections.'

BRENDAN ATKINS,
WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO FILM MAKER FINTON MAHONEY
AND FORMER COLLECTION OFFICER ANNA GRAY.

The Morrison collection project was supported by the Indigenous Culture Support Program, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

WEBLINK >

Visit the Morrison collection online at www.australianmuseum.net.au/The-Morrison-Collection.

NAIDOC week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Visit the Museum from 3-10 July to be part of this year's theme, *Change: the next step is ours.*
