



INDIGENOUS COLLECTIONS SYMPOSIUM

Promising Practices, Challenging Issues
and Changing the System

NEXT STEPS



Indigenous Collections Symposium: **Next Steps**

Prepared for the Ontario Museum Association

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Executive Summary

The Ontario Museum Association (OMA), in partnership with the Woodland Cultural Centre and Deyohahá:ge: Indigenous Knowledge Centre at the Six Nations Polytechnic, held the Indigenous Collections Symposium on March 23 – 24, 2017. The theme of the Symposium was *Promising Practices, Challenging Issues and Changing the System*. The intention was to open an ongoing conversation between the OMA, its members and Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) communities in Ontario regarding the care and interpretation of Indigenous collections, particularly those held in trust by non-Indigenous organizations, in light of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This paper presents key themes emerging from participants' feedback recorded in discussion sessions and evaluation surveys and recommendations for next steps the OMA could take to build on the foundation laid by the Symposium.

Indigenous Collections Symposium Key Themes

Promising Practices

- The Symposium itself, framed as it was by an Indigenous world view
- The TRC Calls to Action, as the spark to opening respectful dialogues and sharing
- Symposium presentations illustrated a spectrum of promising practices and partnerships in museums, Indigenous cultural centres and archives. Detailed proceedings are to be published
- Digitization was cited as an opportunity for knowledge-sharing and increased accessibility.

Challenging Issues

- Making connections with Indigenous communities requires museums to reach out
- Building strong and respectful relationships between museums and Indigenous communities requires a new collaborative partnership approach
- Being more inclusive of Indigenous communities will require museums to make fundamental changes to their mandates, policies and practices
- To play their role in reconciliation and build relationships with Indigenous communities, museum workers need training and education.

Subthemes:

- Returning Ancestors' remains and cultural objects to communities (repatriation)

- Awareness of the history of residential schools
- The need for funding.

Aspirations for the Future: Changing the System

- Indigenous communities and museums have meaningful collaborative relationships
- Indigenous peoples are fully involved in the care and management of their cultural objects
- Through their public education mandates, museums are centres of reconciliation
- Museum workers have the education and skills needed to be effective in new roles related to reconciliation and relationship-building.

Subthemes:

- Returning Ancestors' remains and cultural objects to communities (repatriation)
- Museums play a role in the preservation and promotion of Indigenous languages
- Government policy and legislation strengthens and supports relationships between museums and Indigenous communities.

Recommendations for Next Steps

Taking participants' feedback into consideration, the recommendations, aligned with the OMA's four roles, provide a strategic framework that will help the OMA demonstrate leadership with members and partners and support its members in their efforts to build partnerships with Indigenous communities and steward Indigenous collections. Each recommendation includes a mix of short- and long-term actions that could be considered in the development of action plans:

- As **Thought Leader**: Develop and implement an OMA Indigenous reconciliation policy and strategy
- As **Advocate**: Promote the role of the OMA and Ontario's museums as proactive partners in the journey to reconciliation
- As **Convenor**: Facilitate networks connecting museum, Indigenous and broader cultural heritage communities, with the reconciliation goals of building partnerships, removing barriers and enhancing understanding
- As **Professional Body**: Develop an Indigenous training and education program focusing on two groups of learners: museum workers and Indigenous communities

Introduction

The Ontario Museum Association (OMA), in partnership with the Woodland Cultural Centre and Deyohahá:ge: Indigenous Knowledge Centre at the Six Nations Polytechnic, held the Indigenous Collections Symposium on March 23 – 24, 2017. The theme of the Symposium was *Promising Practices, Challenging Issues and Changing the System*. The intention was to open an ongoing conversation between the OMA, its members and Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) communities in Ontario regarding the care and interpretation of Indigenous collections, particularly those held in trust by non-Indigenous organizations, in light of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Supported by the OMA, a working group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage professionals developed the Symposium program in collaboration with an Indigenous facilitator (see Appendix 1 for members). The format consisted of presentations showcasing collecting, collections management, repatriation and reconciliation initiatives, followed by round table discussions on promising practices and next steps. Museum studies students from the University of Toronto, Algonquin College and Fleming College, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), played an important role in documenting the symposium and recording discussions. Both days ended with Witness Reflections by Indigenous participants.

This paper presents:

- A. Key themes emerging from Symposium participants' feedback and
- B. Recommendations for next steps the OMA could take to build on the foundation laid by the Symposium.

The Ontario Museum Association

The OMA is the leading professional organization advancing a strong, collaborative and inclusive museum sector. It defines its roles as Thought Leader, Advocate, Convenor and Professional Body.¹

To facilitate a robust sector, the OMA ensures its values and goals are aligned with those of government. In 2016, the OMA completed an extensive strategic planning process in consultation with its members. The resulting *Ontario's Museums 2025: Strategic Vision & Action Plan* envisions museums as key

¹ Ontario Museum Association, *Towards 2025: the Ontario Museum Association's Strategic Plan 2016-2021* (slide presentation), 4.

institutions contributing to strong societies and economies. Implementing *Ontario's Museums 2025* will require museums to proactively engage with community members and stakeholders in strategic planning and all areas of museum work. The strategy aligns with the goals of the *Culture Strategy for Ontario: Telling our Stories, Growing our Economy* (also released in 2016) to promote cultural engagement and inclusion, strengthen culture in communities and fuel the creative economy (see Appendix 2 for details).

The OMA helps museums stay relevant and ready to play a role in addressing emerging or current issues through its professional development program, including conferences and symposia. In the past few years, annual conferences have increasingly focused on societal themes (e.g., *Healthy Museums, Vibrant Communities* (2014), *Diversity and Inclusion* (2016)). The 2017 conference, *Strong & Successful Museums: The Road to Renewal*, will include such topics as Community Building, Collaboration and Partnerships.

In addition to annual conferences, the OMA partners with other organizations to develop symposia addressing specific issues. In 2012, the OMA partnered with Royal Ontario Museum and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (Ministry of Community and Social Services) to present an Accessibility Symposium, sharing best practices and innovative programming in museums compliant with the accessibility standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Another symposium on Diversity and Inclusion is in the planning stages for 2018.

Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Indigenous Collections Symposium was a response to the release of the TRC report, which proposes a very specific role for museums and archives “as sites of public memory and national history”² in the journey toward reconciliation:

[R]egional and local museums ...have a critical role to play in creating opportunities for Canadians to examine the historical injustices suffered by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, engage in public dialogue about what has been done and what remains to be done to remedy this, and reflect on the spirit and intent of reconciliation. Through their exhibits, education

² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report* (2015), 246.

outreach, and research programs, all museums are well positioned to contribute to education for reconciliation.³

In bringing together and reiterating themes and recommendations of two previous documents, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), the Report is a key document marking a turning point in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and government. Appendix 2 contains more details on RCAP, UNDRIP and related legislation and policy.

³ *Ibid.*, 251.

Part A: Indigenous Collections Symposium Key Themes

This section sets out key themes in the areas of *Promising Practices*, *Challenging Issues and Changing the System*, summarising Symposium participants' thoughts and feedback in round table discussions, Witness reflections and post-event evaluation surveys. Participation in discussions and surveys was voluntary, however survey response rates were higher than normal – of 84 delegates registered for the Symposium, 65 (75%) responded to the evaluation survey (approximately 20% of these self-identified as Indigenous) – indicating the participants' deep engagement.

Promising Practices

Many participants saw the Symposium itself as a promising practice, bringing together a wide range voices – Indigenous and non-Indigenous, large and small institutions, museums and other culture sectors – on Indigenous land and framed by an Indigenous world view. The TRC Calls to Action were also cited as promising, as the spark to opening respectful dialogues and sharing, indicating that the connection between the TRC report and the Symposium was clearly understood.

Case studies presented at the Symposium illustrated a spectrum of promising practices and partnerships in museums, Indigenous cultural centres and archives. As plans are underway to print the proceedings, this paper will not recap all the presentations. However, many participants singled out Cara Krmpotich's presentation, *Unsettling Museum Catalogues*, as particularly timely, relevant and practical as digital catalogues evolve from internal record-keeping tools to external education and community outreach tools. Innovative ideas offered in the presentation – reviewing cataloguing practices through an Indigenous community lens (e.g., addressing outdated language, incorporating traditional knowledge) resulting in more inclusive and enriched museum records – showed that the museum catalogue could be a useful starting point for dialogue. On a related theme, digitization was cited as an opportunity for knowledge-sharing and increased accessibility, providing the means to address the sometimes fragmented knowledge of Indigenous history by bringing together scattered stories and multiple voices.

In the round tables, participants from Ontario museums and heritage organizations gave informal descriptions of work they are already doing, some providing further details following up on the presentations, for example:

- The Ontario Heritage Trust, University of Toronto and Huron-Wendat Nation partnership to rebury the remains of 1760 Huron-Wendat ancestors. The reburial occurred in 2013 at the location of the largest original burial sites, within a conservation area owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust. This was the largest reburial of Aboriginal ancestral remains ever undertaken in North America.⁴
- Museum of Archaeology’s online searchable database makes “collections more accessible and available to the public while sharing knowledge, research, and cultural understanding.”⁵
- In another digital project, Thunder Bay Art Gallery’s project to digitize its permanent collection helped jumpstart conversations with local Indigenous artists that turned into relationships.⁶

Challenging Issues

Participants were asked to identify the most important issues raised during the Symposium. Most, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, were in agreement on the following key issues. These are set out below roughly in order of importance to participants as indicated by frequency of comments.

1. Making connections with Indigenous communities requires museums to reach out.

Museums need to proactively reach out to Indigenous communities to make connections, start a dialogue and build relationships of trust. Many museums recognize that Indigenous communities should be included but do not know who to approach or how to make the initial contact. Sometimes the initial contact fails or is slow to respond, leaving the museum wondering how to proceed. Some simply fear making mistakes. Many people came to the Symposium with questions on the nuts and bolts of how to start building meaningful relationships. Round table discussions provided an opportunity for detailed information exchange and sharing advice.

2. Building strong and respectful relationships between museums and Indigenous communities requires a new collaborative partnership approach.

Community museums are experienced in working with their community members and groups. However, as stewards of Indigenous collections, with a role to play in reconciliation, museums must take a new approach, building collaborative partnerships that go beyond single projects.

⁴ University of Toronto, “Reburial of Huron-Wendat Ancestors,” (news release) September 16, 2013.

⁵ Museum of Archaeology website, MOA’s Online Collection <http://archaeologymuseum.ca/discover-archaeology/moa-collection/>.

⁶ Thunder Bay Art Gallery Permanent Collection Blog <http://theag.ca/category/permanent-collection/>.

Engagement should be approached as an ongoing relationship, based on respect and grounded in cultural awareness. It should be started early, with systems in place for formal or regular collaboration and decision-making (e.g., advisory committee, networks, joint agreements). Museums must be willing to remain open and flexible: new relationships with Indigenous communities may not always develop along a fixed agenda or timetable.

3. Being more inclusive of Indigenous communities will require museums to make fundamental changes to their mandates, policies and practices.

To incorporate Indigenous histories and voices in the museum’s narrative and Indigenous perspectives in collections care, management and use (including education and exhibit programs), museums must look beyond their traditional practices and consider new approaches, developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners. Museums may need to examine the historical assumptions behind their mandates and storylines and revise them to include Indigenous stories (e.g., a “pioneer village” that represents settlers in isolation).

Indigenous communities see their cultural objects⁷ as living things representing their stories and seek greater control over their documentation, care, use and interpretation. This may require the museum to enter into new stewardship arrangements not covered by traditional collections management policies, including policies for returning cultural objects to communities or individuals claiming ownership.

On a practical level, museums may need to adapt traditional collections management tools and practices to incorporate Indigenous traditional knowledge and allow for greater inclusivity and access. Most museums’ databases are based on Euro-centric models; opening digital databases raises issues of dealing with outdated or offensive language, reconciling Indigenous preferences with traditional museum terminology, meeting the different information needs of Indigenous users, and privacy concerns.

4. To play their role in reconciliation and build relationships with Indigenous communities, museum workers need training and education.

⁷ Indigenous Symposium participants indicated a preference for the term “cultural object” or simply “object” over “artifact” to convey that they are living and represent living rather than past cultures.

The current lack of knowledge of Ontario’s Indigenous history among museum workers and boards is preventing them from carrying out the educational role the TRC envisions. Museums need to know and understand the wide multiplicity of Indigenous histories, demographics, languages and world views to effectively communicate and educate others. Overcoming cultural divides and working toward reconciliation require new skills – such as relationship-building and cultural awareness – in the museum worker’s toolkit. Indigenous communities also need people with museum education and training, to help build their capacity to steward collections, educate the public and build partnerships through their own museums and cultural centres.

A few sub-themes emerged from participants’ feedback. These are based on fewer comments but nevertheless reflect a consensus.

1. **Returning Ancestors’ remains and cultural objects to communities (repatriation).**⁸

This was an issue for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Museums had many questions about the process of transferring ownership and control of Ancestors’ remains and cultural objects to Indigenous peoples, such as how to start the conversation, what sort of protocols are required, how to identify objects and store them respectfully pending return and whether these processes fall under government jurisdiction.

2. **Awareness of the history of residential schools** and their impact on survivors and communities, coupled with the role of museums in building awareness and implementing the TRC’s Calls to Action.

3. **The need for funding** for research, training, outreach, maintaining relationships and building Indigenous capacity. Unless they are tied to a project, it is difficult for museums to generate revenue for these types of ongoing activities.

⁸ Some Indigenous people prefer the more respectful term “Ancestors” or “ancestral remains” to “human remains”. In addition, Ontario’s Indigenous communities have mixed opinions on the term “repatriation” when applied to Ancestors and their cultural objects, some preferring the more neutral “return”.

Aspirations for the Future: Changing the System

Participants were asked to offer suggestions for actions that would be most effective in ensuring the conversation started at the Symposium would continue. Many indicated that they are receptive to changing the system but do not know where to start. For the most part, key themes for envisioning a new future mirror key issues in scope and priority.

1. Indigenous communities and museums have meaningful collaborative relationships.

This was by far the greatest priority for the future: participants repeatedly used such terms as open, sharing, equality, communication, dialogue, honest, respect, trust and breaking down barriers to describe ideal future relationships. Relationships may start out as community engagement but grow into equal partnerships, collaborations and shared responsibility, through formal processes (e.g., networks, Indigenous liaisons). Museums become comfortable with sharing or letting go of control, moving away from Indigenous people needing permission to access objects of their culture and moving toward increased Indigenous inclusion, access and control.

2. Indigenous peoples are fully involved in the care and management of their cultural objects.

New relationships with Indigenous communities help museums review and adapt their traditional collections management policies and practices to be inclusive and respectful of Indigenous perspectives (e.g., concepts of objects as living things), traditional knowledge (e.g., protocols for care), stories and terminology (e.g., names in language of origin) in the care and interpretation of Indigenous collections. Indigenous communities have the capacity to be stewards of cultural objects that are returned to them or are jointly stewarded as the result of a new relationship.

3. Through their public education mandates, museums are centres of reconciliation.

Museums and Indigenous cultural centres connect people and stories through cultural object, and are places of gathering for public dialogue, following through on the TRC's vision. New partnerships, inclusive practices and more trained Indigenous museum workers facilitate Indigenous peoples sharing their own stories with the broader public. Related to this is a reconsideration of how traditional museum tools such as digital collections databases can help museums move reconciliation forward by reflecting Indigenous world views for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.

4. Museum workers have the education and skills needed to be effective in new roles related to reconciliation and relationship-building.

Community museum staff and boards are culturally sensitive and prepared for building relationships with Indigenous communities through education and training in Indigenous histories and cultures. Training is developed and delivered in collaboration with Indigenous communities and could include such options as mentoring by Elders. Indigenous peoples have museum training and skills.

As in the “Issues” section, sub-themes emerged from participants’ feedback. These are based on fewer comments but nevertheless reflect a consensus.

1. Returning Ancestors’ remains and cultural objects to communities (repatriation).

Related to Point 2 above, museums are prepared to go beyond shared stewardship and have policies, processes and protocols in place to transfer ownership of cultural objects, documents and intellectual property to Indigenous communities. All Ancestors’ remains are returned to their descendent communities.

2. Museums play a role in the preservation and promotion of Indigenous languages.

Using current museum communication tools (e.g., exhibit signage, educational programs, on-line collections databases) museums document and raise awareness of Indigenous languages, contributing to their preservation.

3. Government policy and legislation strengthens and supports relationships between museums and Indigenous communities.

Provincial government legislation and museum policies address issues related to Indigenous collections and provide tools to build relationships between museums and Indigenous communities (e.g., museum liaisons similar to archaeologists and Indigenous archaeological liaisons).

Participants’ Feedback on the OMA’s Role

Participants were also asked to give feedback on the role OMA should play in supporting the ongoing work around Indigenous collections in Ontario. Key themes, in order of priority:

- 1. Facilitate connecting Indigenous communities and museums** for face-to-face discussions and networking through symposia, conferences and regular gatherings

2. **Build museum workers' capacity** to engage and work with Indigenous communities through education and training (e.g., webinars, hands-on workshops, publications)
3. **Facilitate ongoing communication between and among Indigenous communities and museums.** Continue supporting the Indigenous Symposium working group as a permanent resource. Develop and support formal and informal networks, local Indigenous museum advisory groups.
4. **Support development of Indigenous capacity in the museum field.** Support training of Indigenous museum workers and development of Indigenous organizations. Encourage museums to hire Indigenous staff and students and provide opportunities for internships and job shadowing.
5. **Promote awareness** of issues raised at the Symposium among governments and related culture sectors.

Participants also recommended a wide range of other organizations the OMA should partner with:

- Provincial cultural and heritage organizations
- Federal, provincial, municipal and Indigenous governments
- Non-profit and for profit cultural heritage organizations
- Educational institutions
- Indigenous cultural organizations
- Other provincial museum associations and Canadian Museums Association (CMA).

Priority subject areas for professional development identified by Symposium participants:

- Starting conversations, developing partnerships and working with communities
- Incorporating Indigenous traditional knowledge in collections care and management protocols (e.g., identifying sacred objects, providing access)
- Return (repatriation) of Ancestors' remains and Indigenous objects
- Indigenous cultures and history (including languages, world views)
- Incorporating Indigenous content and input in other areas of museum practice (e.g., education programming, exhibits)
- Cataloguing Indigenous collections
- Archaeological collections

Part B: Changing the System: Recommendations for Next Steps

The culture strategy background document, *Environmental Scan of the Culture Sector*, identifies the emergence of new relationships between museums and Indigenous peoples as a key trend.⁹ The challenge to imagine this new relationship was posed at the end of the Symposium by a young Indigenous Witness who, while praising the dedication of museum professionals, spoke movingly of an approaching paradigm shift that will test current museum training and “white gloves” approach, but which is needed to bring Indigenous cultures out of silence.

To support a transition while making most effective use of its resources, the OMA must ensure its next steps are strategic, practical and achievable. They must be consistent with its defined roles and align with its strategic plan as well as sector and government priorities. The following recommendations, aligned with the OMA’s four roles, provide a strategic framework that will help the OMA:

- A. Demonstrate leadership for its members and among partners by raising the profile of Indigenous communities within the OMA’s organization and daily operations
- B. Support its members in their efforts to reach out, engage and build partnerships with Indigenous communities and steward Indigenous collections.

Each recommendation includes a mix of short- and long-term actions (many repeating or adapting suggestions from Symposium participants) that could be considered in the development of action plans. It is understood that implementation of any recommendations and actions must be done with the guidance and participation of Indigenous partners and will require support and resources.

Role: Thought Leader

The OMA as a credible leader that advances the museum sector through research, and the promotion of internationally recognized best practices and new innovative models of excellence

Recommendation: Develop and implement an OMA Indigenous reconciliation policy and strategy.

Rationale: The Ontario government’s policy to lead by example and apply a model of reconciliation on a daily basis is set out in *The Journey Together: Ontario’s Commitment to Reconciliation With Indigenous Peoples*. The OMA has already taken steps toward reconciliation by convening Indigenous working group

⁹ Communications MDR, *Environmental Scan of the Culture Sector: Ontario Culture Strategy Background Document*, 2016, 60.

members to plan the Symposium, holding the Symposium in Indigenous territory and acknowledging Indigenous traditional territory on its website. By further aligning with the Ontario government's commitment with a clearly stated policy implemented through an organization-wide strategy, the OMA will demonstrate its leadership as a Provincial Heritage Organization and provide an example to members and partners. Through its provincial and territorial network, the OMA is aware of the reconciliation work happening in museums in other jurisdictions, and that many are active in different ways. As a Thought Leader, the OMA would welcome more collaboration and dialogue at the national level.

A comprehensive reconciliation policy and strategy could include:

- *Establish required Indigenous cultural competency training for all new board and staff members*
- *Recognize important events honouring or raising awareness of Indigenous peoples (e.g., Louis Riel Day (third Monday of February), National Aboriginal Day (June 21), Treaties Recognition Week (first week of November)) through news releases, member news and public events*
- *Acknowledge Indigenous traditional territory in communications and outreach products, meetings and conferences*
- *Explore opportunities to enhance Indigenous participation in OMA governance and operations (e.g., council of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, advisory/support group similar to Group of Ontario Emerging Museum Professionals (GOEMP), designated Indigenous board role or position, designated student and contract positions)*
- *Consider a new Award of Excellence in Reconciliation to support and recognize OMA members' local partnerships with Indigenous communities*
- *Encourage national dialogue on museums and reconciliation through the existing interprovincial museum association forum. Consider proposing the subject as an agenda item at the CMA annual meeting of museum associations.*

Role: Advocate

The OMA as champion, creating positive change for museums by proactively positioning and representing museums with stakeholders and funders.

Recommendation: Promote the role of the OMA and Ontario's museums as proactive partners in the journey to reconciliation.

Rationale: As noted in Part A, museums aspire to be centres of reconciliation, through their functions as community hubs, educators and stewards of Indigenous collections. In fulfilling the educational role the TRC sees for them, the OMA and Ontario's museums will be in a position to contribute to and partner in municipal and provincial reconciliation initiatives.

Actions could include:

- *Conduct research (e.g., survey of OMA member museums, other jurisdictions) to gather case studies and set benchmarks to measure museums' progress in building relationships with Indigenous communities*
- *Liaise with municipal and provincial governments to ensure the role museums play in reconciliation is considered in policy and program development and implementation (e.g., Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) archaeological artifacts and heritage organization grants initiatives)*
- *Liaise with MTCS to ensure the Standards for Community Museums can provide for the changes museums must make in policies and practices to accommodate Indigenous interests and relationship-building. Work with MTCS to explore the feasibility of a stand-alone Indigenous relations standard (this work could potentially be positioned as a pilot for a broader review of the Standards)*
- *Highlight museums' partnerships and reconciliation initiatives in outreach and promotions (e.g., Museum Month). Promote Indigenous museums and cultural centres.¹⁰*
- *Develop materials (e.g., key messages, statistics) for museums to use in their communications with local municipalities and funders.*

Role: Convenor

The OMA as the nexus of a strong network, building a more collaborative, professional and connected sector, through effective communications, and the provision of valuable resources and services

Recommendation: Facilitate networks connecting museum, Indigenous and broader cultural heritage communities, with the reconciliation goals of building partnerships, removing barriers and enhancing understanding.

Rationale: Symposium participants strongly support this role for the OMA; connecting and communicating are recurrent key priorities. The presentations from the archives and archaeological sectors illustrate that many challenges and goals are shared across sectors; museums and the broader

¹⁰ See for example Société des musées du Québec, *Museum Routes For Exploring First Nations Inuit And Cultures*, <http://itineraires.musees.qc.ca/en/first-nations-inuit-cultures>

sector also would benefit from sharing experiences and resources. Many participants spoke of breaking down silos between organizations and sectors as the Indigenous world view is holistic – issues around cultural objects cannot be considered in isolation from the broader framework (e.g., environmental, social, legal). In addition, support is strong for a permanent OMA Indigenous working group that can function as a network anchor, leading or advising on initiatives supporting relationship-building and capacity development (e.g., training, conferences, advisory material). The need for broader Indigenous diversity at the Symposium was noted (e.g., more representation from northern First Nations and Métis communities); while recognizing that the Symposium was clearly promoted as a first step, this could be a reflection of a lack of awareness of the OMA among Indigenous cultural organizations (e.g., Indigenous OMA membership is low: of the 700+ museums, galleries, and historic sites the OMA represents, there are only five First Nations cultural centres¹¹). In alignment with its values of diversity, inclusivity and access, the OMA should reach out to bring Indigenous cultural centres and organizations into its networks, both to increase public awareness of Indigenous history and to increase awareness of the OMA’s work and membership benefits among Indigenous organizations.

A network plan could include:

- *Put in place a permanent Indigenous working group with an effective structure (e.g., board advisory committee, stand-alone working group) and clear Terms of Reference and mandate*
- *Reach out to Indigenous community cultural organizations and develop an incentive program to attract and grow Indigenous OMA membership (e.g., reduced membership or program rates, sponsors for student conference attendance)*
- *Through the OMA website, communications and training resources, support and encourage local and regional networks connecting museums and Indigenous communities. This could include existing regional museum networks, new community-based or community of interest networks and virtual networks*
- *Reach out across cultural sectors and to Indigenous provincial organizations involved in cultural protection and promotion (e.g., Chiefs of Ontario (COO), Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Tungasuvvingat Inuit, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), First Nations Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTOs)) to build connections and explore shared interests and opportunities for collaboration and partnerships. Consider convening a round-table meeting of Provincial Heritage Organizations (PHOs) for face-to-face discussions.*

¹¹ Ontario Museum Association, “OMA Stats and Facts Sheet,” (May 2015).

Role: Professional Body

The OMA as a provider of professional development programs fostering continued professionalization of the field. The OMA also advances and provides support for museums in the achievement of internationally recognized best practices.

Recommendation: Develop an Indigenous training and education program focusing on two groups of learners: museum workers and Indigenous communities.

Rationale: Building capacity through training was one of the top priorities of Symposium participants, but museum workers and Indigenous peoples identified different needs. Participants from museums sought to build skills in relationship-building and cultural awareness; Indigenous participants sought to develop museum skills and capacity to preserve their cultural objects and share their stories and knowledge within and beyond their communities. These trends are based on a small sample and further research is needed to verify actual training and education needs and identify existing resources. However, the OMA is in a good position to address some of these needs, having a well-developed training and educational structure already in place, with tools and formats that can be used or adapted.

Although not targeted at museums, TRC Call to Action #57 calls upon federal, provincial and municipal governments to provide skills-based training and education to public servants in Indigenous history and cultural competency; as recipients of public funding, museums should be part of this direction. In addition, provincial museum associations are in early discussions about a national training strategy for museum professionals, which would likely have an impact on the OMA's training and education programs.

Municipalities and partner organizations may be able to play a role in addressing museum workers' and Indigenous communities' skills and knowledge needs through existing training opportunities (e.g., the Ontario Archaeological Society (OAS) and Association of Professional Archaeologists (APA), in partnership with Indigenous communities, have delivered training programs for archaeologists that could be considered).

A comprehensive training and education strategy could include:

- *Conduct research to assess educational needs and existing training/education opportunities available to museum workers and Indigenous communities, and identify appropriate areas for OMA-created training*

- *Determine most appropriate formats and tools for training delivery. Consider using or adapting current formats and tools (e.g., preconference workshops, conference sessions, webcasts) as much as possible*
- *Explore the appropriateness of developing a new CMS module covering Indigenous history, cultural sensitivity and practical advice on working with Indigenous collections*
- *Use the “Resources” section of the OMA webpage to provide access to information about non-OMA training opportunities and other guidance (much of it currently available) on working with Indigenous communities (e.g., toolkits¹², contact lists, tip sheets, wise practice case studies)*
- *Collaborate with national partners (provincial and territorial museum associations, CMA) on a national museum training strategy to ensure training related to Indigenous relationships is addressed.*

¹² See, for example, the Union of Ontario Indians' (UOI) *A Toolkit for Understanding Aboriginal Heritage & Burial Rights & Issues* <http://www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Anishinabek-Heritage-Burials-Toolkit.pdf>.

Appendix 1: Indigenous Collections Symposium Working Group

- **Anong Beam-Migwans, Art Director and Curator, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation**

Has completed studies in Visual Arts at School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Ontario College of Art and Design, and Institute of American Indian Arts.

- **Petal Furness, Museums and Archives Manager, Grey Roots Museum**

- **Heather George, Research Coordinator, Indigenous Research, Office of Vice-President Research, McMaster University**

Researcher and public historian focused on Indigenous issues in museums and public education. Currently Research Assistant at McMaster University and a member of the Chiefswood National Historic Site Board of Trustees. Heather's research and work has been influenced by her mixed Mohawk and European ancestry and she finds great fulfillment in fostering greater understanding of Indigenous history and culture for non-Indigenous audiences. She holds an undergraduate degree in History and Indigenous Studies from Trent University, a diploma in Museum Management and Curatorship from Fleming College and a Masters Degree in Public History from the University of Western Ontario.

- **Linda Grussani, Curator, Aboriginal Art, Canadian Museum of History**

Curator and art historian born and raised in the Ottawa area. Over the last 16 years, she has worked with the collections of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the National Gallery of Canada and the Carleton University Art Gallery in addition to the Canadian Museum of History. She holds a BA and MA in Art History from Carleton University and is currently working on a PHD in Cultural Studies at Queen's University.

- **Michelle Hamilton, Assistant Professor and Director, M.A. Public History Program, University of Western Ontario**

Public Historian whose research focuses on historical and contemporary issues surrounding museums and heritage, social memory and commemoration, the history of anthropology, cultural identity and issues of representation and repatriation, usually in regards to First Nations peoples in Canada.

- **Rick Hill, Project Coordinator (retired), Deyohahá:ge: Indigenous Knowledge Centre, Six Nations Polytechnic**

- **Tanis Hill, Assistant Project Coordinator, Deyohahá:ge: Indigenous Knowledge Centre, Six Nations Polytechnic**

Member of the Mohawk nation, Turtle clan, born and raised at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in Ontario. She has an Honours Bachelor of Commerce with a specialization in Accounting and is a graduate of the two-year Ogwehoweh Language Diploma Program – Mohawk, a collaborative program of Six Nations Polytechnic and McMaster University.

- **Cara Krmpotich, Associate Professor, Museum Studies, University of Toronto**

Areas of teaching and research include critical collections management, indigenous and museum relations, material heritage and memory, cultural property and repatriation, and the material culture of kinship. She leads a group for Indigenous seniors living in Toronto, providing hands-on access to collections locally and further afield. She is the author of two books, *The Force of Family: repatriation, kinship and memory on Haida Gwaii* and *This Is Our Life: Haida Material Heritage and Changing Museum Practice*.

- **Janis Monture, Director, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives, Six Nations Development Corporation**

Former Executive Director, Woodland Cultural Centre.

- **John Moses, Six Nations Delaware Band PhD Student, Comparative Studies in Literature Art and Culture, Centre for Aboriginal Culture and Education, Carleton University**

- **Paula Whitlow, Executive Director, Woodland Cultural Centre**

Former Museum Director at Woodland Cultural Centre. She is the director of over 35,000 artifacts accessioned in the collections of the Museum, making the Museum at the Centre one of the largest facilities in Canada managed and administered by First Nations.

- **Facilitators:**

- Carolyn King, Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation
- Judy Wolfe, Consulting Matrix Inc.

Appendix 2: Indigenous Relationships and Museums: Legislation and Policy Scan

As a lead-in to the Symposium, the OMA presented three webinars:¹³

- Museum Perspectives on the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples and the Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- An Introduction to Residential Schools in Ontario: Histories and Interpretation
- The Indigenous History of Ontario.

These webinars provide key historical and background information to help Symposium participants prepare for meaningful discussions. However, a greater understanding across the sector of recent legal, policy and relationship developments is important as the OMA considers potential future actions to support strengthened relationships between Indigenous communities and museums across Ontario.

The Canadian Constitution

Section 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes and affirms "the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada". The Act further defines "aboriginal peoples" to include "the Indian [i.e., First Nations], Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada."¹⁴ This sets out the basic premise that Indigenous peoples have certain inherent rights based in practices traditional to their cultures ("aboriginal rights") as well as rights enshrined in treaties with the Crown. There is no single legal definition of "aboriginal rights"; generally, they are connected to traditional use of the land as identified by an individual or community. This may include the continuing use of areas for cultural or spiritual practices (e.g., burial sites).

Treaties and Indigenous Cultural Objects

Currently, Indigenous peoples' rights to cultural objects as an aboriginal right is a legal grey area (although the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) may provide guidance). Some modern-day treaties are providing greater clarity by including cultural objects within the treaty agreement. The Nisga'a Treaty between the Nisga'a Nation, British Columbia and Canada came into effect in 2000. Chapter 17 recognizes Nisga'a ownership of Nisga'a objects in the collections

¹³ Recordings of these webinars are available to OMA members at <http://www.museumsonario.webcast.guru/>.

¹⁴ Constitution Act, 1982. Justice Laws website <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-16.html#docCont>.

of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now Canadian Museum of History) and the Royal British Columbia Museum and makes provisions for their return or shared stewardship.

Closer to home, the Algonquin Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle (the agreement that sets out the main elements to be included in a final treaty) was signed in October 2016 by the Algonquins of Ontario, Ontario and Canada. Chapter 10 addresses heritage and culture, including archaeological sites, artifacts, burial sites and documentary heritage resources. It recognises that these represent important physical manifestations of Algonquin lifeways, traditional values and culture and acknowledges the interest the Algonquins have in their ownership, stewardship and conservation. It includes commitments to develop protocols and processes to address Algonquin heritage interests, such as transferring artifacts to Algonquin cultural institutions and disposition of burials.

Ontario's Heritage Legislation

Some Indigenous communities have been critical that neither Ontario nor Canada has legislation governing Indigenous ancestral remains and cultural objects in museums similar to the US *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA). On the other hand, the Assembly of First Nations/Canadian Museums Association's *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* notes that others find it "preferable to encourage museums and Aboriginal peoples to work collaboratively to resolve issues concerning...cultural objects."¹⁵ The *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) has limited scope to address artifacts. Part VI dealing with conservation of archaeological resources empowers the Minister of

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

Enacted in 1991 to provide a process for US museums and Federal agencies to identify and return Native American ancestral remains, sacred objects and cultural objects to descendants.

A few repatriations have involved Canadian-based communities. In 2010, Batchewana First Nation worked in collaboration with the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians to welcome the remains of their Ancestors back from the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History.

Tourism, Culture and Sport to direct archaeological artifacts (more than half of which are Indigenous) to a "public institution". This term is not defined, but could include museums and Indigenous cultural

¹⁵Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museums Association, *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples: Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples*, 3rd ed. (1994), 5. This report is not included in this scan as it is discussed in detail in the OMA webinar *Museum Perspectives on the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples and the Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

centres. In a survey conducted by MTCS in 2014, archaeologists expressed willingness to transfer artifacts to museums but cited museums' lack of storage capacity as a barrier.¹⁶

To be eligible for the Community Museums Operating Grant (CMOG), museums must meet criteria set out in OHA *Regulation 877: Grants for Museums*, including meeting minimum standards set out in *Standards for Community Museums in Ontario (2000)*. While this document does not have a separate Indigenous relations standard, most of the standards provide scope for museums to develop policies and processes to build relationships with Indigenous communities and address their interests.

The *Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002* (FBCSA) governs the discovery of Indigenous burials and the artifacts associated with them.¹⁷ This Act empowers the Registrar of Cemeteries to declare a site an aboriginal peoples burial ground and require landowners to negotiate with the related Indigenous communities on the disposition of the ancestral remains and associated artifacts. The agreement reached may require that the remains and artifacts be disinterred and reinterred in an Indigenous community cemetery.

Evolving Relationships

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)

RCAP was established in 1991 to examine the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada and make recommendations to improve it. The Commission found that discriminatory government actions under the *Indian Act* had resulted in “policies that removed Aboriginal people from their homelands, suppressed Aboriginal nations and their governments, undermined Aboriginal cultures and stifled Aboriginal identity.”¹⁸ The Report, released in 1996, makes 440 detailed recommendations, laying out a framework for a new relationship based on mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility. Volume 3, Chapter 6, *Arts and Heritage*, draws on the findings of the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* and includes excerpts from that report in an Appendix.

¹⁶ Ipsos, *Archaeological Collections Management Study: Final Report* (2014).

¹⁷ “aboriginal” and “artifacts” are terms used in the FBCSA.

¹⁸ Institute on Governance, *Summary of the Final Report of The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa, 1997), 2.

The Commission makes 21 recommendations to build new relationships and address the negative legacies of the colonial past in:

- Heritage: identify and protect historical and sacred sites and safeguard Aboriginal heritage from misappropriation and misrepresentation
- Language: conserve and revitalize Aboriginal languages
- Media: enhance the presence of Aboriginal people and cultures in the media
- Arts: support the literary and artistic expression of Aboriginal people.

The federal government's response, *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* commits to reconciliation and renewal. It includes support for language preservation but does not address other heritage recommendations.

Supreme Court Decisions on Duty to Consult and Accommodate

Throughout the 2000s, several Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decisions moved the bar by determining that provincial governments are also partners in the relationship between Indigenous communities and the Crown. In landmark decisions such as *Haida Nation v. British Columbia*, *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia* (both 2004) and *Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada* (2005), the SCC determined that provincial and federal governments, in compliance with the Constitution and the "honour of the Crown", have a duty to consult with and accommodate Aboriginal communities when contemplating actions that may negatively affect real or potential aboriginal or treaty rights. The SCC further determined that the consultation process may be delegated to a third party (for example, a development company) but the Crown is ultimately responsible for ensuring consultation and accommodation are fair and appropriate.

Ipperwash Inquiry

In 2003 the province of Ontario established an inquiry into the 1995 death of Dudley George, of the Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation, at Ipperwash Provincial Park. The Ipperwash Inquiry Report, released in 2007, contains 100 recommendations. The Report is critical of government's lack of progress in relationship-building as recommended by RCAP. Coming at the same time as the SCC rulings on duty to consult and accommodate, it set the foundation for a renewed relationship between the Ontario and Indigenous peoples. Among the government actions responding to the Report were the creation of a new Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the development of the New Relationship Fund to

help Indigenous communities build consultation capacity. A joint First Nations/Ontario Ipperwash Inquiry Priorities and Action Committee was set up to address the Report's recommendations in collaboration First Nations.

A separate joint First Nations/Ontario working group was established to work on the seven recommendations aimed at increasing Indigenous participation in protection of Indigenous heritage, burial and sacred sites in land use and development processes. The Report encourages the development of plain language public educational material and municipal archaeological master plans. In this context, MTCS released updated *Standards and Guidelines for Consultant Archaeologists (2011)* which for the first time requires archaeologists to engage with Indigenous communities at key points in the archaeological fieldwork process. MTCS provided further guidance in the draft bulletin, *Engaging Aboriginal Communities in Archaeology*.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

UNDRIP outlines an internationally – agreed upon set of Indigenous rights and actions governments should take to address and protect them “in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect”. Central to the Declaration is the concept of “free, prior and informed consent”, making Indigenous peoples equal partners with governments.

The Declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007. Canada partially endorsed it as an aspirational document in 2010 and endorsed it fully in 2016 in its response to the TRC Report. While not legally binding, it may provide guidance in the future to clarify sec. 35 aboriginal rights. Many articles include facets of Indigenous cultural rights – key ones for museums are:

- Article 11: Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites and artifacts.
- Article 12: Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies, including use and control of their ceremonial objects and repatriation of their human remains.
- Article 15: Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.

- Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights.
- Article 31: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and intellectual property.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

The TRC was a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Its mandate was “to contribute to truth, healing and reconciliation”¹⁹ by witnessing and documenting the historical record of Residential Schools. In 2015, the Commission released its report with 94 recommendations to government (“Calls to Action”) to address the legacy of the residential school system.²⁰

As in the Ipperwash Report, the TRC deplores the government’s progress in implementing the RCAP recommendations. Ontario released its response to the TRC’s Report, *The Journey Together: Ontario’s Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, in 2016. Several commitments could be of interest to museums, e.g.,:

- Work toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples by working with the federal government to address UNDRIP and taking active steps to apply a model of reconciliation on a daily basis
- Promote understanding of the residential schools’ legacy by supporting the restoration of the Mohawk Institute Residential School and development of an interpretation centre
- Support Indigenous Culture through development of an Indigenous Cultural Revitalization Fund that would support cultural activities and programming in Indigenous communities, including on-reserve and in urban centres.

Ontario’s Culture Strategy

MTCS is mandated to help build a strong innovative economy in Ontario through strategic support and investment in three key sectors of the economy – tourism, culture, and sport and recreation. In the area

¹⁹ Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, 2006, Schedule N, 1.

²⁰ Details of the TRC Report are available in the OMA webinar *Museum Perspectives on the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples and the Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

of culture, MTCS helps to build capacity for the conservation of Ontario's heritage and the sustainability and growth of Ontario's arts sector and creative economy through its policies and programs:

- MTCS provides grants, business development assistance and tax credits to stimulate cultural production, investment and job creation in creative economy sectors
- Through funding programs for artists, artist-educators, not-for-profit organizations, training institutions and cultural tourism partners, MTCS supports artistic creation and presentation, organizational development, and training programs
- MTCS administers the *Public Libraries Act*, supports two provincial library service boards and provides an operating grant program, project funding, advice and outreach to increase public and First Nations libraries' sustainability and improve capacity while encouraging innovation
- MTCS administers the *Ontario Heritage Act*, licenses archaeologists, and provides operating grant programs, advice and outreach to support museums, heritage organizations and municipalities to protect and preserve Ontario's heritage resources
- MTCS also supports 14 provincial agencies, including the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Ontario Heritage Trust.²¹

In 2016, Ontario released the *Culture Strategy for Ontario: Telling our stories, growing our economy*, a ten-year plan to guide the province's support of culture. This comprehensive strategy, the first for the province, is based on broad public consultation, including extensive engagement with Indigenous communities.

The Strategy, in development at the time of the release of the TRC Report and launched at the same time as *The Journey Together*, reaffirms the province's commitment to respect and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in its key principles and has some overlap in deliverables (e.g., the Indigenous Cultural Revitalization Fund, currently in development as the Indigenous Culture Fund to be delivered by the Ontario Arts Council). Other key principles of "diversity and inclusion" and "collaboration and partnerships" are relevant to guide museums' efforts to build relationships with Indigenous communities.

Three of the strategy's goals include initiatives that support the development of new relationships between museums and Indigenous peoples. Some initiatives apply to community-based cultural

²¹ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, *Estimates Briefing Book 2016-17*.

organizations (which could include museums), others respond to specific museum or Indigenous input, e.g.,:

- Goal 1: Promote cultural engagement and inclusion
 - In collaboration with Indigenous peoples, establish an ongoing dialogue to address shared culture priorities, such as preservation of Indigenous cultural heritage and languages and participation in all aspects of Ontario's cultural life.
 - Help facilitate cross-cultural understanding between First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and museums and other culture organizations to create stronger relationships and partnerships.
- Goal 2: Strengthen culture in communities
 - Review and update provincial funding programs for community museums and heritage organizations to build capacity, strengthen leadership and support more diverse organizations.
 - Work with Indigenous partners, archaeologists, museums and other stakeholders to develop a framework to improve conservation of archaeological artifacts so that current and future generations can learn about and understand our past.
- Goal 3: Fuel the creative economy
 - Collaborate with government partners and the tourism industry to identify opportunities to grow cultural tourism in Ontario, including Francophone tourism and Indigenous-led tourism, and offer authentic and compelling visitor experiences.
 - Increase awareness and uptake of the Canada-Ontario Job Grant among employers in the culture sector to assist them in developing their workforces through employer-led digital skills and other training.

Key Legislative and Policy Timeline

Ontario		Canada	International
	1982	Canada's Constitution Act, section 35, recognizes and affirms the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal people in Canada	
	1990		USA: <i>Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)</i> enacted
	1991	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) established	
	1992	Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museum Association releases <i>Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples</i>	
	1996	RCAP Report released	
	1996-7	Canadian Archaeological Association adopts <i>Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples</i>	
Updated <i>Standards for Community Museums</i> released	2000	Nisga'a Treaty comes into effect	
ROM and CMH develop repatriation policies	2001		
Ipperwash Inquiry established	2003		
	2004-10	Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decisions clarifying duty to consult and accommodate	
	2006	Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement announced; includes commitment for Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)	
Ipperwash Inquiry Report released	2007		<i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)</i> adopted by the UN General Assembly (Canada partially endorses in 2010; endorses fully in 2016)

Ontario		Canada	International
	2008	Canada makes a Statement of Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools and establishes the TRC	
<i>New Standards and Guidelines for Consultant Archaeologists</i> released	2011		
<i>Provincial Policy Statement, 2014</i> released	2014		
	2015	TRC report released.	
<i>The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples</i> released	2016	Canada endorses UNDRIP	
Ontario's Culture Strategy released	2016		
Algonquin Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle signed	2016		

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