

**Statement on response to submission made by David  
Shoebridge on behalf of Rodney Kelly  
Released: Wednesday 7 June 2017**

The University recognises the great significance of the spears, not only to the Gweagal people, but to all Australian citizens, and indeed anyone who is interested in Australian culture and history. It considers it very important to continue developing strong cultural links and exchanges with indigenous Australians, particularly members of the Gweagal people and to take steps to continue to increase the accessibility of the spears to everyone for whom the artefacts are culturally, historical and educationally significant.

The University has concluded that at present these aims can best be achieved by retaining the spears in the Cook-Sandwich Collection in Cambridge because:

- 1: The request contains no clear proposal for housing and conserving the spears if they were to be returned
- 2: There is no commitment by an Australian institution to care for the spears
- 3: Removing parts of the Cook-Sandwich collection, which is of great historical, scientific and educational importance nationally and internationally, would cause considerable harm by depriving the collection of its integrity
- 4: It is very important that any request for a change to the current situation of the spears should be made only after full consultation with accredited representatives of the Gweagal people, and on terms which command their support.