



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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ASIAN HERITAGE PIECES SEIZED IN PERTH

More than 140 ceramic objects believed to be between 400 and 1000 years old have been seized from a Perth home.

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts spokeswoman Rose Webb said the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service contacted the department after detecting 10 protected objects being imported into Australia.

“When investigators from the federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts searched this Perth property, they found more than 140 objects, including bowls, plates, and vases,” Ms Webb said.

“The pieces—originating from China, the Philippines and Japan—are registered as cultural property by the National Museum of the Philippines.

“Some of them are believed to be from the Ming and Sung dynasties, which means they were made somewhere between the years 960 and 1644”.

“It is illegal to export protected cultural objects from the Philippines without a permit.

“Investigations are continuing, and we are working with the National Museum of the Philippines and the Philippine Embassy to determine the provenance of these items.

“Once our investigations are over, if the objects are found to have been illegally exported, we aim to return this cultural heritage to the Philippines.”

The items were seized under the *Protection of Movable Cultural Property Act 1986*. Under this legislation it is an offence to import an object that is protected under legislation of its country of origin. The maximum penalty for such an offence is \$100,000 or five years’ jail, or both, for an individual, or \$200,000 for a body corporate.