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NATIONAL QUEENSLAND JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN

Government steps in to ensure Bjelke-Petersen estate stays in Australia

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The auction of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's personal effects has met a surprising hitch, with the federal government warning prospective buyers that many items might be considered Australian protected objects.

The identification would mean they must remain on Australian soil.



Sir Joh's car, a 1982 Jaguar, is for sale. LLOYDS AUCTIONS

items ranging from a signed 1969 moon landing poster, now at \$6000, to Lady Fio's cake tins (now at \$370) and her recipes (\$230), are still available until Tuesday for online bidding, most unreserved.

More than 800 items of the couple's collection are up for auction through Lloyd's Auction House and thousands of bids have been placed.



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But the federal government contacted Lloyd's this week and the auction house's chief operations officer, Lee Hames, said they welcomed the government's intervention to ensure items did not leave Australia.

"The items in this auction tell many important stories about Australia's history and in particular Queensland's growth and how it came to be the state it is today, so we applaud the government for reaching out to protect its history," he said.



A Japanese figurine is one of the many Asian-influenced home decorations on sale from the Bjelke-Petersen estate.
LLOYD'S AUCTIONS

According to the federal Office for the Arts website, the export of "cultural material" is managed under the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act of 1986.

under the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act of 1900.

Permits can be issued for the export of regulated cultural items.

Sir Joh's controversial status in Australian politics is expected to drive interest in the auction. Popularity he enjoyed in Queensland, owed in part to infrastructure projects, fell away swiftly as his government's corruption came to light.

The level of police corruption under his leadership eventually led to the Fitzgerald Inquiry and a reform of policing in Queensland, along with the jailing of two of his ministers and his hand-picked police commissioner.

Sir Joh was tried for perjury, which resulted in a hung jury, and he was not retried.

Lady Flo was herself an impressive and controversial figure, who served as a federal senator from 1981 to 1993.

The couple's family issued a statement saying they had decided to allow the sale of the couple's possessions from their home in Bethany, and the new owners would surely "honour and treasure them as much as our whole family has".

Mr Hames said it was a "privilege" to auction the huge number of items in an "extremely rare" sale.

- with Stuart Layt

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HERITAGE



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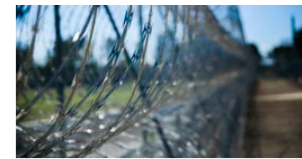
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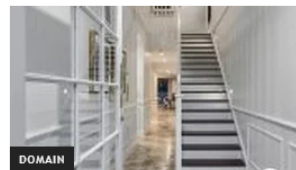
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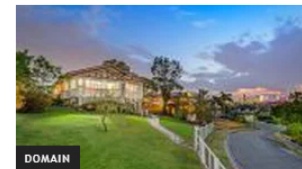
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