

From: [REDACTED]
To: [CHA_Review](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission to the Review of the Cultural Heritage Acts
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For five years I have supported the campaign by the Wangan and Jagalingou people to protect cultural heritage, visible and invisible, on their traditional lands now threatened by mining developments. I commend their submission to the Review, as a sensible reform to heritage protection laws.

All Australians have an interest in coherent and balanced laws that recognise the duty of custodians to protect the lands that have been entrusted to them from adventitious exploitation by development proponents. Visible and invisible heritage values in these lands should be weighed correctly against the interests of venture investors, and the short term economic rents that accrue to the State from them.

The Queensland Government and people have a proud record of advancing the status and giving voice to traditional owners, often well ahead of other states. The review is an opportunity to reset the way we, as Australians, see the country; and the respect we can show to those who have deep knowledge of it and what it supports; going well beyond the assays of mining companies or the jobs of construction workers.

While, as a non-resident of Queensland, I may be disqualified from voicing my concerns, I did wish to indicate that the matters to be covered in the Review and its outcomes matter to all Australians; and for the future of our continued relations with this ancient land and its traditional custodians

As indicated above I found the central arguments in the Wangan and Jagalingou submission:

Amend the definition of 'Aboriginal party' so that Traditional Owners with cultural connection to Country are always involved in consultation and negotiation processes, regardless of their status as a native title party. Create greater enforcement powers for First Nations, so that we aren't reliant on the State to protect our cultural heritage if it is in imminent danger of harm or destruction. Establish an independent First Nations-led decision-making body that is responsible for dispute resolution and mediation, and for assessing who the right people to speak for Country are. cogent and a sound basis for future cultural heritage protection not only in Queensland but throughout Australia.

Until now conflict and incoherence have hindered traditional owners in carrying out their duties. They have allowed developments to proceed which in retrospect should never have proceeded. These decisions, by design, negligence, ignorance or happenstance reflect only shame on lawmakers and regulators who have not extended principle judgement on the nature of cultural heritage in the Australian context. This is an opportunity to move away from this unsatisfactory legislative environment, into one that is workable, respected, and enforceable for

the future betterment of Queenslanders, and indeed all Australians.

I commend the Wangan and Jagalingou submission

Yours sincerely

Stephen Horn
Co-chair
International Volunteers for Peace

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[REDACTED]

email: admin@ivp.org.au