

Reform the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Acts

Queensland's laws currently fail to recognise the right people to speak for Country

The management and protection of cultural heritage should be in First Nation people's hands, and not in the hands of the State or developers. I am calling for the following reforms, that are needed at a minimum to improve the protection of cultural heritage in Queensland:

- Amend the definition of 'Aboriginal party' so that traditional owners with cultural connection to Country can be involved in consultation and negotiation processes, regardless of their status as a native title party.
- The definition of 'Aboriginal party' in the Cultural Heritage Acts should be changed so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with particular knowledge about both tangible and intangible cultural heritage in an area are able to be recognised as a party and consulted on cultural heritage management and protection, regardless of whether there is already a native title party recognised for that area.
- 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.

Kind Regards

Nicole Read