

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

We need First Nations to be empowered to facilitate the protection of Country and the right Traditional Owners to speak for Country by introducing a new First Nations-led, independent body in Queensland.

To the Queensland Government:

It has come to my attention that the Queensland Government is currently reviewing the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 (Qld)* and *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003 (Qld)* (**Cultural Heritage Acts**). I believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to be empowered to prevent or seek redress for illegal impacts to their cultural heritage. I wish to make a submission as to what I believe the Government needs to do in order to achieve true justice for Aboriginal people in Queensland. These recommendations are set out below.

- First Nations need greater enforcement powers to reduce their reliance upon the State to protect their cultural heritage when it may be at risk of harm or destruction
- In respect of empowering the abovementioned people to prevent or seek redress for illegal impacts to their cultural heritage, I ask that the State provide a guarantee that they will not face adverse cost orders
- Furthermore I ask the State to provide financial assistance to the Traditional Owners who seek to protect their cultural heritage at law

To assist in furthering their recommendations is important that:

- A new independent body be set up that is led by First Nations people.
- It is also necessary to 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
- An independent First Nations-led decision-making body should be established that is responsible for dispute resolution and mediation, and for assessing who the right people to speak for Country are.

I hope you will consider these recommendations and implement them. We know that dispossession is an intergenerational phenomenon that continues to blight the lives of those affected. These suggested changes will do much to restore a sense of justice and respect for Aboriginal culture.

Thanking you

Yvonne Hartman

