

The review of the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) and *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) (**Cultural Heritage Acts**) requires reform to **better protect First Nations cultural heritage in Queensland**. Contact wanganandjagalingousog@gmail.com

It is clear that 2003 Acts are now irrelevant in 2022 so they must be reviewed, reformed and updated in the light of the critical impacts of Climate Change and the inability of Federal, State and Local government to provide legislation and funding to make lasting improvements to keep global temperatures below a 2 degrees increase.

A submission was sent from the community engagement team qchub@dssatsip.qld.gov.au Although I am not a member, I want to offer them my support to ensure all reviewed, reformed and updated Acts **protect and conserve** Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION and BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION.

Last year, 2021, the Federal LNP government's Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley weakened the EPBC Act by handing over more powers to State and territory Governments. This is why State legislation must now be reviewed, reformed and updated.

In 2022 I read Bill Gammage's award winning book "*The Biggest Estate on Earth – How Aborigines Made Australia*" published by Allen and Unwin in 2011. Since its publication Australia – particularly Queensland – has suffered horrendous droughts, wild fires, storms both dust and tropical, and now FLOODS.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION and BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION is the very essence of Aboriginal / First Nations CULTURAL HERITAGE. They have understood for longer than the Pyramids and Stone Henge – for between 60,000 and 40,000 years - that **THEY ARE** "COUNTRY".

Through books like "*The Biggest Estate on Earth – How Aborigines Made Australia*" any thinking and caring Australian, no matter where they came from AFTER 1788, knows that WE are "country" and that caring for its living (now dying) treasures is OUR salvation as it was that of Australia's First Nations.

THIS is MY submission and no longer much time left to listen and to change. This is the Queensland – and hopefully the new 2022 Federal Labor Government's – opportunity. Review, reform and update the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) and *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and you can beat back fossil fuelled climate change.

Traditional Owners have no enforcement powers to protect their cultural heritage. Under the Cultural Heritage Acts they had little to no ability to stop recent destruction by Adani (operating as Bravus) of their cultural heritage, leaving them reliant on the government to protect our cultural heritage.

In October last year, they wrote to the Minister requesting he exercise his power under the Cultural Heritage Act to issue a stop order to protect their cultural heritage. The Minister refused to do so. Now, irreparable damage has potentially been done. Think too of the Great Barrier Reef !

Queensland failed to act to protect unique cultural heritage from harm, preventing an injunction to stop the excavation because of the high costs of legal action.

The Minister **MUST** investigate whether this activity was in breach of the Cultural Heritage Act and he **MUST** stop ignoring the evidence of Traditional Owners and expert archeologists and biologists.

Mrs. Rosemary Farrell – [REDACTED]

