



Namultja Aboriginal Corporation

Servicing the Marranbala Land and Sea Rangers

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To the Scrutineer Committee:

I strongly oppose the proposed changes to the Sacred Sites Act and I ask the Committee to reject the Bill. A better process would be to work with indigenous organisations and the cultural authorities to improve this valuable organisation and its functions. We need to ensure our process are upheld or we risk damaging what is sacred, timeless and enriching to all in society.

1. Ignoring Traditional Owners

The Bill allows Authority Certificates (permits for land use) to be transferred without consulting Aboriginal custodians. Sacred sites aren't just paperwork—they're part of living culture. Excluding Traditional Owners from these decisions is unfair and disrespectful.

2. No Real Consequences for Breaking the Law

The Bill lets companies avoid penalties by making promises ("enforceable undertakings") instead of facing fines or court for damaging sacred sites. This weakens protections and lets offenders off too easily.

3. Government Interference

The Bill gives the Minister power to fire AAPA Board members, risking political control over an independent body. Aboriginal Land Councils nominate most Board members, but the Minister could now override their work.

4. No Proper Consultation

Many important representative organisation got only one week's notice about the Bill, with no chance to review it. Changes to sacred sites laws must involve Aboriginal communities—rushing this process shows a lack of respect.

These changes put sacredness at risk and ignore Aboriginal rights. We have had situations on our Country where proper procedures were not followed and not only did it offend our cultural authority, but hindered development with subsequent court hearings. It also eroded confidence of Traditional Land Owners to collaborate on projects with subsequent proponents. Poor laws and protections mean that we all lose.

Yours sincerely

David Barett



Chairperson

Chairperson Namultja Aboriginal Corporation 3/4/2025