

**From:** [Philippa Rowland](#)  
**To:** [LA Committees](#)  
**Cc:** [Philippa Rowland](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Amendment Bill  
**Date:** Friday, 4 April 2025 3:08:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [RfPA email logo.jpeg](#)

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From: **Philippa Rowland** <[philippa.rowland@gmail.com](mailto:philippa.rowland@gmail.com)>  
Date: Fri, 4 Apr 2025 at 16:00  
Subject: Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Amendment Bill  
To: <[LA.Committees@nt.gov.nt](mailto:LA.Committees@nt.gov.nt)>

Dear Madam/Sir,

I write to express my grave concern at the tone and the content of the proposed Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Amendment Bill, along with serious misgivings about the unseemly haste in the process by which these wide-ranging changes are being undertaken in the NT.

As President of the Multifaith Association and now also Chair of Religions for Peace Australia, I would like to express sincere disappointment at the apparent haste with which the Northern Territory Government is moving to diminish the intent and the protection provided to Australia's cultural heritage by the Sacred Sites Act (available here in full: [https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/consol\\_act/ntassa1989453/](https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/consol_act/ntassa1989453/)).

Aboriginal sacred sites are recognised and protected as an integral part of Northern Territory and Australian cultural heritage under both the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and the Sacred Sites Act. Both Acts define a sacred site as : 'a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition.'

Preserving Aboriginal cultural heritage and sacred sites in the Northern Territory is a vital responsibility of the Northern Territory Government. Sacred Sites bring great community education and significant financial benefit to the Top End through cultural tourism. The idea of creating *transferable certificates*, as put forward in the amendments, is of great concern. This is especially a worry if if a developer with a certificate sells a property, then the certificate goes to the new buyer, even if the development is going to be substantially different.

All Australians will benefit from the NT Government maintaining stringent protection for priceless cultural heritage remaining in the Top End. We do not want to see any repeat of the Juukan Gorge event.

<https://www.afr.com/companies/mining/the-inside-story-of-how-juukan-gorge-was-lost-20201210-p56mih>

<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/LegislationPortal/Bills/By-Session>

Yours sincerely,  
Philippa Rowland

Chair, Religions for Peace Australia / President, Multifaith Assoc. South Australia

*Respect to all Elders from the unceded Kaurna Peremangk lands of Adelaide Hills*



Peace and good wishes to all - for the Earth