

CHA Review  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP)  
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23 August 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Review of the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003***

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of the Queensland Government's *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (ACHA 2003).

Reference is made to the issues or areas of concern, raised in the 2019 'Consultation Paper – Review of the Cultural Heritage Acts'.

I would like to raise the following points:

1. That major project proposals (e.g. mining, exploration, construction, quarrying, land subdivision, infrastructure for aquaculture and water extraction, infrastructure for residential, industrial and water/energy/transport developments) requiring an Environmental Impact Statement EIS and/or are greater than one hectare in size, automatically trigger a need for a ACHA 2003 Part 6 (comprehensive) Cultural Heritage Study with the Aboriginal Party. Are sufficient checks made when the EIS is reviewed?
2. That the process of *self-assessment* be reviewed and improved, as substantial areas and objects of Aboriginal cultural heritage are being disturbed and destroyed. I believe that a more extensive overview with monitoring, is needed by Traditional Owners and their appointed heritage consultants. Land-users making use of tree clearing laws at local and state government levels, are probably in most cases, not even aware of their 'Duty of Care' and self-assessment obligations in relation to the ACHA 2003.
3. I strongly support any initiatives to help raise awareness on and implement or administer the ACHA 2003, and especially support ideas to seek increased collaborations, and that give agency to and empower Traditional Owners in Caring for Country. There is a huge disparity in

the number of funded non-Aboriginal Ranger/Landcare/Environmental Officer roles, in comparison to the small number of Traditional Owner Ranger roles.

4. The Queensland Government needs to provide incentives to local councils across the State, for such councils to provide on their websites and at workshops, awareness raising and educational resources on the ACHA 2003 and 'Duty of Care', and the need to consult with Aboriginal Parties.

5. Organisations such as the Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service need staff trained in recognising the cultural heritage values of places like Mount Coolum on the Sunshine Coast. The recent draft (visitor and land-use) management plan for Mount Coolum National Park on the Sunshine Coast, failed to make any mention of the ACHA 2003 as an important legislative measure in land-use planning. While over \$900,000.00 has been spent recently in the construction of walking track and signage upgrades, no specific Traditional Owner consultation or Cultural Heritage Management Plan was undertaken for this project. The CAVE (major cave shelter) at Mount Coolum is currently defaced by over 300 carabiners (bolts and hooks for rock climbing), yet is a recorded site under the ACHA 2003.

6. *State of the Environment Reporting*, which includes reporting on the *State of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage*, needs to periodically produce and provide an inventory of recorded, intact and disturbed and destroyed sites and made available to Traditional Owners and where applicable the general public.

Yours sincerely

Colin Ingram

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