

PETITION

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, say the WA State Government has missed an important opportunity to address the inequality in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (WA). The proposed changes are mostly aimed at speeding up approval processes for industry, and do not tackle fundamental problems.

Traditional Owners have been excluded from helping develop the processes that changed the way the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (WA) was administered. Then, after a very short consultation period for a 2012 discussion paper, a draft Bill was released earlier in 2014, designed to (among other things):

- delegate to the CEO of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) the power to change the register of Aboriginal sites, including removing sites from the register; and
- give the CEO the power to make declarations that there are no sites in particular areas, so that developers will no longer need to apply under s 18.

Just like State laws protecting non-Aboriginal heritage, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* should provide for preservation and enhancement of sites, and public education about Aboriginal heritage. The current Act does not do any of these things, and the changes do not address these deficiencies at all.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to form a Select Committee to facilitate the development of a new framework for reform of the Act, which should:

- 1. involve Aboriginal peoples in meaningful ways (e.g. in their capacity as custodians of Aboriginal heritage, not mere stakeholders); and**
- 2. build on the excellent previous suggestions to reform the Act e.g. the Senior Review (1995) and the Evatt Review (1996).**

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Please have as many people sign this petition as possible, but **ensure that you stop taking new signatures in time to return all of the ORIGINAL, signed petition sheets** to Simon Hawkins, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, **by Wednesday 19 November 2014**. Even if a sheet has just one original name, address and signature, please post it to YMAC, PO Box 3072, 249 Hay Street, EAST PERTH WA 6892. More information is at: www.aboriginalheritage.net.au.