



TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE INC.

ABN 48 212 321102

HEAD OFFICE

198 ELIZABETH STREET,
G.P.O. BOX 569,
HOBART, TAS. 7001
Phone: (03) 6234 0700
Fax: (03) 6234 0799
Email: hobart@tacinc.com.au

D

182 CHARLES STREET,
P.O. BOX 531,
LAUNCESTON TAS. 7250
Phone: (03) 6332 3800
Fax: (03) 6332 3899
Email: launceston@tacinc.com.au

D

53 ALEXANDER STREET,
P.O. BOX 536,
BURNIE TAS. 7320
Phone: (03) 6431 3289
Fax: (03) 6431 3372
Email: burnie@tacinc.com.au

PRESS RELEASE

THE DESTRUCTION OF TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL HERITAGE CONTINUES

The Aboriginal community is absolutely devastated at the decimation of a priceless Aboriginal heritage site on the banks of the lower reaches of the Derwent River. The damage was found yesterday when members of the Aboriginal community were on a kayaking trip in the area. They could hardly believe what they were seeing.

A small parcel of land surrounding the precious site was recently returned to the Aboriginal community by Hydro Tasmania. This site is one of only about 10 places in Tasmania containing this type of hand stencil art work. This art work connects us with our forebears, and reminds us of our obligation to continue to protect what thousands of generations of our people who have walked this land before us they have left us. It is now the responsibility of all Tasmanians to assist us protect our heritage.

This senseless destruction to a sacred site is an indictment on the state government which has continually refused to introduce improved Aboriginal heritage protection laws. It is also an indictment of many local councils which approve development in the close vicinity of Aboriginal heritage places and think a small buffer zone will keep out vandals. It doesn't.

Years of neglect of Aboriginal heritage by government and their attitude that our heritage is a low priority compared to all other development has encouraged some elements of the Tasmanian community to think that they can wreak this type of senseless damage with immunity.

We are asking the police to investigate this criminal act as a matter of urgency to ensure these racist vandals are exposed and brought to justice. We have pressed the government for years to improve the protection afforded to our heritage but the government refuses to act. The government has had the Brighton Bypass built on our Aboriginal heritage at kotalayna, 4 WD vehicles encouraged to destroy our precious sites in the West Coast Aboriginal cultural landscape and individuals know that there are few penalties if they go out and destroy our heritage.

The Aboriginal community is not funded to protect our own heritage and we need stronger legislation, stronger leadership by government and other community leaders and responsibility given to the Aboriginal community before the few Aboriginal heritage places that remain are also destroyed.

Contact: Adam Thompson