



# TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE INC.

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## PRESS RELEASE

### URGENT CALL FOR CHANGES TO THE ABORIGINAL RELICS ACT

Yesterday the Aboriginal community revealed the destruction of Aboriginal ochred hand stencils in a cave in central Tasmania that had been used by their people over the last thousand years and until around the time of the English invasion in 1803.

Now the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has reacted angrily to Premier Will Hodgman's response to that desecration.

TAC Chief Executive, Heather Sculthorpe, said, "The Premier calls this desecration "shameful" and says Heritage Minister Groom will now liaise with the Aboriginal Heritage Council on options to address deficiencies in the out-dated Aboriginal Relics Act. This disgraceful buck-passing is just another excuse for inaction."

Ms Sculthorpe said, "Since before this government was elected, the TAC has been urging the Premier and Minister Groom to make quick and easy changes to the Aboriginal Relics Act. The main changes needed are to increase penalties for destruction in line with those that apply to historic heritage; and to eliminate the date of 1876 as the cut-off point for items to be defined as Aboriginal heritage or "relics". The Hodgman government has refused to make these easy changes. Now the Premier says Minister Groom will refer the issue to government advisors. To do that now is like cutting the tail off the horse that has already bolted!"

Ms Sculthorpe concluded that, "With a federal election looming, it's the last roll of the dice for this Hodgman Liberal government to show that it is not totally frozen by inaction on Aboriginal issues."

Heather Sculthorpe  
Chief Executive  
26 May 2016  
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