



# TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE INC.

ABN 48 212 321 102

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

182 CHARLES STREET,  
P.O. BOX 531,  
LAUNCESTON TAS. 7250

Phone: (03) 6332 3800  
Fax: (03) 6332 3899  
Email: launceston@tacinc.com.au

53 ALEXANDER STREET,  
PO. BOX 536,  
BURNIE TAS. 7320

Phone (03) 6431 3289  
Fax: (03) 6431 8363  
Email: burnie@tacinc.com.au

## Press Release

### Further delay to Aboriginal Relics Act amendments

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is angry and disappointed that the State Government has further delayed the proposed changes to the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975. The State Government are claiming they need to carry out more consultation on the matter.

“We have been lobbying the State Government for years to provide better protection to our heritage by making amendments to the Relics Act – but we have largely been ignored” said TAC spokesperson, Adam Thompson.

“Earlier this year, some highly significant Aboriginal rock art was vandalised in the Tasmanian highlands and the incident was highly publicised. The State Government then announced that they would amend the Relics Act. That was over 6 months ago”, said Mr Thompson.

“The TAC agreed that the State Government’s proposed amendments would not be sufficient for the long term but would be helpful in the short term – if they were to be made quickly”

“Now we are hearing that there will be further delays in the process and that the State Government needs more time to consult. Who exactly are they consulting with? We have made the State Government aware of our position and the failings of the Relics Act are already widely known”, said Mr Thompson.

“If the State Government was serious about the protection of Aboriginal heritage, it would have acted sooner on this matter. We are concerned that this government is far more concerned with the impacts Aboriginal heritage protection have on development. This government’s insistence on opening up 4WD tracks in the Arthur Pieman – knowing the threat these activities have to Aboriginal heritage, shows that they put little value on Aboriginal heritage”, said Mr Thompson.

“The penalties for damaging Aboriginal heritage are low. Lower than the penalties for damaging European heritage. There is also a provision in the Relics Acts that allows for ignorance to be used as a defence, making it very difficult to prosecute anybody. There is barely any deterrent to prevent people from damaging heritage – and that includes the agricultural and forestry industries”.

“Go fishing out of season or without a licence and Inland fisheries can take your boat and car for not complying with their laws. Damage ancient, irreplaceable Aboriginal heritage and you get a slap on the wrist - and that’s only if you can actually be prosecuted. Things have to change quickly”, said Mr Thompson.

“We call on the State Government to quit stalling and make amending the Relics Act a priority”.

21.11.2016

Adam Thompson

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

(03) 63323800