

Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

To whom it may concern;

I am contacting you in regards to the consultation the Tasmanian Government is conducting about the proposals to the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995.

I am not Aboriginal; however, I have had conversations with many Aboriginal community members who have said they have concerns about the proposed change to the Act, including the proposal about how it could be managed in the future and the Governments proposal to amend how Aboriginal people are elected and how land is returned to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is the main Aboriginal community controlled Aboriginal organisation. It appears they have concerns around this review. Why is the Tasmanian Government not talking and LISTENING to our Indigenous community?

The Aboriginal community have said that they have real concerns about how they have been treated by the Aboriginal Affairs Minister – Roger Jaensch and do not want any revisions to the ALCT elections and that there is a clear process in conjunction the Tasmanian Electoral Commissioner with an Aboriginal Panel. That there is clear process in place to ensure only Aboriginal people apply to be on their roll and stand on elections and that the Government should be supporting ALCT with funding to support the Aboriginal community with elections as per the white elections to get funding and helping to support fund community led projects.

We should be listening to our Aboriginal community who are the experts in their own culture and heritage. They know more about managing land, they have been doing this for thousands of years. Not groups of people without expertise or knowledge. It would be culturally inappropriate on our behalf to take away their rights to manage their own land.

The Aboriginal community do not want land returned to organisations. They want land to continue to be returned to ALCT as they are a central body and have confidence by the Aboriginal community to look after returned land. It is concerning to think that the Government would propose the notion of returning sacred Aboriginal land to groups of people, rather the Aboriginal community as a collective.

With all of the destruction and heartache the Government has caused to our first nations people, I would hope the Liberal Government would listen to the Aboriginal community and engage with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre as the peak organisation in this state, rather than shutting the voices out of the Aboriginal community.

The Government could resolve the legitimate concerns by the Aboriginal community by meeting with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre to work with them to provide further funding and opportunities, and to look at returning land to our indigenous community which was stolen.

Regards

Lonnie Weeks