



Bin your bill until you have consulted with us about our sacred sites

The Central Land Council calls on the Northern Territory Government to respect Aboriginal people and due process by stopping the Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill pending proper consultation with traditional owners.

It also asked Minister Josh Burgoyne to confirm during this consultation process some promises he made during his discussion with the council today.

“We strongly urge you to bin this bill and co-design a consultation process with the land councils so you can take into account the views of Aboriginal traditional owners and reflect the commitments you made today,” CLC chair Warren Williams said.

Mr Burgoyne told CLC delegates that traditional owners will decide whether there will be an ‘enforceable undertaking’ or a prosecution where a site has been damaged and that sacred site clearance certificates will only be transferred from one developer to another if the scope of a project is exactly the same as in the original certificate.

The proposed bill does not include these commitments.

The minister also agreed to “keep talking”. The delegates welcomed this and resolved to hold him to his commitments.

They told him that the NT land councils have long advocated for the recognition of their sacred sites processes and how to strengthen the Territory’s sacred sites law.

“The Country Liberal Party’s fast tracked amendments are designed to please land users and developers, but sideline us completely,” Mr Williams said.

“We are outraged because our sacred sites mean the world to us, and it’s our duty to protect them and not just take the government’s word on trust.

“Our sites belong to us, not the government, and it should not change the law protecting our sites without our informed consent.”

CLC processes and approvals guarantee to developers that the right people have been consulted and that approved projects won’t land them in court.

A co-designed bill would streamline the process by recognising land council sacred site clearance certificates that traditional owners and proponents often prefer because they provide certainty and save costs.

Mr Williams said the Territory will not be able to deliver certainty to developers or achieve lasting positive legislative and policy outcomes by cutting corners at the expense of Aboriginal people.

“Despite the unholy rush of the government we have made a [submission](#) that builds on our earlier submissions and includes the amendments to the bill that are important to us.”

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