



Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania

Media Release - 31 March 2021

World Heritage reservation a chance for legacy-leaving Aboriginal-owned national park

The Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) has called for the creation of a new, Aboriginal-owned and managed national park tenure for Tasmania to ensure the government can meet its national park commitment to UNESCO's World Heritage community and deliver land justice for Tasmanian Aborigines.

As consultation closes on the Government's process to reserve 25,000ha of World Heritage-listed land in kooparoono niara/Great Western Tiersⁱ, the ALCT is releasing its submission and has formally written to Premier Peter Gutwein in response to his State of the State invitation for proposals to return land to the Aboriginal community.

"With proclamations coming to Parliament that will change the tenure of Unallocated Crown Land in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Premier Gutwein has the chance to deliver a win-win and leave a lasting legacy that breaks new ground for land justice and reconciliation in Tasmania – an Aboriginal owned and managed national park," said Rebecca Digney, Manager of ALCT.

"The Government has promised UNESCO a national park and Aborigines real steps towards reconciliation, here's a tangible opportunity to honour both commitments.

Aboriginal-owned national parks are common around the world and examples on mainland Australia include Uluru and Kakadu, however, Tasmania has no such tenure currently available. It is entirely within the power of Parliament to create one, with leadership from Government. Some Aboriginal-owned parks are leased back to state or federal parks management agencies, but that is not what the ALCT proposes as the Aboriginal community has the capacity to manage this Country.

"All land in lutruwita/Tasmania was Aboriginal land for thousands of generations and not one ha was ever ceded to the crown," said Ms Digney. "Here's a genuine opportunity to take Unallocated Crown Land and return it back to Aboriginal ownership. When Parliament changes the tenure of this land there is a moral imperative to right past wrongs and return it to its rightful owners.

"The current government proposal is to convert this land to two lesser conservation reserve tenures well below national park status. Can't Tasmania do better?"

For comment - Rebecca Digney – 0499 331 940

ⁱ <https://dpiwte.tas.gov.au/about-the-department/reservation-of-future-potential-production-forest-land>