



Media Release – 21 September 2021

DISMAY AND DESPAIR – GOV'T IGNORES ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIM

The Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) has expressed severe frustration, dismay and despair over last week's [announcement by Government](#) that it would push ahead with declaring lesser reserve tenure for World Heritage-listed forests in the kooparoonia niara/Great Western Tiers area, against the results of [community consultation](#) and ignoring a formal land claim for an Aboriginal-owned national park.

In March, ALCT responded to the consultation process and the Premier's personal invitation for proposals for land returns by formally writing to him to claim rights to the ownership of the Unallocated Crown Land. ALCT proactively proposed a new Tasmanian land tenure, an Aboriginal-owned and managed national park. ALCT is yet to receive a response from the Premier and has written to him again today.

"Here is an opportunity where Unallocated Crown Land that was never ceded by Aboriginal people will be presented to Parliament for a tenure change," said Rebecca Digney, Manager of ALCT.

"Logic, fairness and justice would suggest a return to Aboriginal ownership should be prioritised and we have proposed an iconic new Aboriginal-owned national park but instead, Government looks set to disappoint and deliver the lowest common denominator, low grade reserves."

"According to the consultation report, 97% of people who participated in the community consultation called for national park tenure and numerous other organisations and a neighbouring landholder supported an Aboriginal-owned national park.

In his State of the State speech Premier Gutwein '*committed to receive and consider proposals for further land return*' and the recent Budget claimed, '*the return of land to the Aboriginal people of Tasmania is a priority for the Government*'.

"With last week's announcement and a complete lack of response to our claim for a kooparoonia niara National Park, it is difficult not to be cynical about grandiose Government claims that it cares for the aspirations of the Aboriginal Community.

"Just when will someone in Government walk the talk and deliver meaningful outcomes when they have the chance? Here is a real and genuine opportunity being squandered before our eyes."

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