



Aboriginal Heritage Action Alliance

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Juukan Gorge Inquiry Report: WA Traditional Owners respond

Senior Traditional Owners representing the [Aboriginal Heritage Action Alliance \(AHAA\)](#), with cultural authority from across WA, have welcomed the Senate's Juukan Gorge Inquiry report and called on the WA government to immediately withdraw its controversial proposed Aboriginal Heritage Bill.

Clayton Lewis, a Nanda Widi man with family and cultural ties to the Mid-West, Murchison and Gascoyne regions, said, "The Inquiry underlines what we've long known: that existing legislation serves developers not protection of our culture and sacred sites.

"The report should cause the WA government to hang its head in shame, highlighting its failure to listen to Traditional Owners and the lack of trust we have in government to protect culture.

"We need new laws in WA that enshrine our right to give our consent and say 'no' to destruction.

"Governments must stop prioritising development over our culture. The loss of cultural heritage and sacred places is a loss for all Australians."

Noongar human rights lawyer and academic, Dr Hannah McGlade, said "The WA government must withdraw the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill* and work with Aboriginal people to develop and co-design laws which protect sacred sites for generations to come.

"The Inquiry's calls for modern, best practice standards to protect cultural heritage, in line with Australia's international obligations, are long overdue and must be acted upon immediately."

Banjima Elder, Slim Parker said, “We want the opportunity to be sitting at the table with the Government and negotiate the process going forward. We’ve had enough of being told”.

Contact: Alison Orme 0432 332 104

Further background on AHAA and the WA Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill:

AHAA website <https://aboriginalheritagewa.org.au>