

Saltwater People submission to the Protecting Spirit of Sea Country Bill 2023

Submission on the Bill

We write in support of the spirit and intent of the Protecting Spirit of Sea Country Bill 2023 as tabled by Senator Dorinda Cox.

Saltwater People are a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the protection of Sea Country and First Nations People's cultural heritage, songlines and whale ancestors.

We represent whale and Sea Country lore holders from around the coast of Australia who are responsible for the protection of ancient Sea Country songlines.

We welcome the addition of "intangible cultural heritage" as defined within the UNESCO International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage".

We welcome the inclusion of Traditional Owners and knowledge holders in First Nations communities in the definition of 'Relevant Persons'. We hope to see the definition of knowledge holder include those with cultural knowledge and responsibility for Sea Country Songlines.

In the creation of standards for engagement, we support the inclusion of direct consultation with First Nations organisations that may not be land holders or native title holders but who have a direct interest in the proponent's proposed activities.

In our view, Federal legislation that directly addresses the importance of protecting not just traditional Sea Country as it is understood and recognised by Traditional Owners but also the spiritual significance of Sea Country in this cultural context is long overdue and we commend Senator Dorinda Cox for introducing this important Bill.

I am happy to be contacted in relation to this submission, and consent to having this submission be publicly available and to have our identifying information associated with this submission.

Jack Pascoe

Saltwater People