



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ARCHAEOLOGISTS INC

18-07-02

The Secretary  
Standing Committee on Industry and Resources  
Inquiry Into Resources Exploration Impediments  
Parliament House, Canberra  
By Electronic Transmission

**RE: Submission from the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Incorporated**

As the leading body for the registration, accreditation and support of consulting archaeological heritage practitioners in Australia the AACAI formally notifies the Committee of its interest in the inquiry and its wish to make specific representations on the theme - *Access to land including Native Title and Cultural Heritage issues.*

Our members regularly carry out both research and applied work in the areas of cultural heritage and native title. This work is conducted for a range of clients including resource developers, land managers and different community heritage stakeholders. Our members cover the disciplinary areas of indigenous, European/contact and maritime archaeology. The land use projects which our members act as consultants to are worth many billions of dollars each year.

The major issues we wish to discuss further are:

- 1) That the regulatory heritage authorities in most states and territories are often under-resourced and/or under-skilled to deal with and expedite the more complex heritage considerations arising under varied state and federal acts;
- 2) That cultural heritage and native title considerations where properly planned for by qualified practitioners *do not* represent impediments to access. Our experience is that delays to resource exploration access are often due to poorly structured work programs, incomplete survey protocols and insufficient direction from heritage regulators as to the required outcomes from cultural heritage assessment and mediation;
- 3) Our members attempt to liaise effectively with numerous land users and heritage stakeholders and often find themselves as intermediaries in complex negotiations. Facilitation of direct and relevant contact between land users and 'owners' is encouraged, however, and is consistent with the aims of the organization; and finally
- 4) The need for government to more formally regulate the important activity of professional heritage assessment, especially given the scale and monetary worth of many key developments involved. This might occur with Acts of Registration for professionals involved in cultural heritage work or improved guidelines from statutory heritage authorities.

The AACAI has well established codes for ethical conduct, professional research protocols and responsibilities to clients and other stakeholders. The AACAI Constitution, these codes and details of Members may be found at [www.archaeology.usyd.edu.au/aacai](http://www.archaeology.usyd.edu.au/aacai)

Yours sincerely,

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National President of the AACAI