

*Tabled by the Minister
at hearing on 14/2/06*



SENATOR THE HON IAN CAMPBELL
Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Senator for Western Australia

The Hon Dr Judy Edwards MLA
Minister for the Environment
29th Floor Allendale Square
77 St George's Terrace
Perth WA 6000

18 OCT 2005

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 18 July 2005 concerning the preparation of a World Heritage nomination for North West Cape/Ningaloo Reef.

I have noted the findings of the Community Consultative Committee and I am aware of your decision to undertake further consultation with stakeholders to resolve outstanding issues. Based on the outcomes of the report, these residual issues will take a considerable amount of time and effort to resolve.

I note the merits of your suggestion to establish a joint Western Australian and Australian Government working group. Such a group will have a difficult task in implementing a consultation strategy that restores the confidence of the public and stakeholders in the nomination process.

A major obstacle to the restoration of public confidence in the process is the unresolved issue of pastoral leaseholders aggrieved at the excision of land from their stations as part of the WA Government's exclusion plan for property along the Ningaloo coast. I am aware of criticism of the consultation process in relation to these excisions and of the impact the loss of land will have on the leaseholders.

I am concerned, for example, that the Lefroy family on Ningaloo Station are being told they must surrender more than 40,000 ha of land, including all the property's watering bores and other vital infrastructure as part of this plan.

Until such time that the WA Government resolves these matters to the satisfaction of all parties and there is consensus among the stakeholders for a World Heritage nomination of the North West Cape and Ningaloo Reef, the Australian Government is not prepared to support the establishment of a working group and cannot progress the nomination.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ian Campbell'.

IAN CAMPBELL

Canberra
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
Telephone: 02 6277 7640
Fax: 02 6273 6101

Perth
GPO Box B58, Perth WA 6838
Telephone: 08 9325 4227
Fax: 08 9325 7906