



The Hon. Tony Burke MP
Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
E: Tony.Burke.MP@environment.gov.au

World Heritage Nomination for Cape York Peninsula

18th October 2012

Dear Minister,

The Apudthama Land Trust which is the owner of land on Cape York Peninsula north of the Dulhunty/Skardon Rivers and described as: **Lot 2 on SO23; Lot 21 on SO45; Lot 12 on SO804386; Lot 103 on SP104552; Lot 43 on SP104552; Lot 1 on SP120090; Lot 27 on SP120091; Lot 2 on SP161905 and Lot 4959 on SP230783** are concerned that the Australian Government is changing the way in which it is consulting about the proposed World Heritage Area on Cape York. Any World Heritage nomination that is hurriedly prepared and which does not involve all the traditional owners of Cape York Peninsula is likely to result in an inferior nomination. This will mean that the opportunity is lost to develop a nomination that becomes a world model for appropriately recognising the continuing traditions of Indigenous people.

We are currently involved in country-based planning which is enabling us to consider World Heritage in the context of our broader land use aspirations and management needs. While we have not reached our decision to pursue World Heritage listing as part of that process, we do want to have this option open to us if it proves to be the best option for our lands. We have found the country planning process very beneficial for our community but we know that many other communities are being denied this opportunity because the Australian government has withdrawn their funding for this process. Instead they are pursuing a rushed nomination with the assistance of an organisation that has previously publicly opposed the assessment process. This has added to the confusion that local people now have about what World Heritage listing might mean. We fully understand why it is important to have our peak bodies

www.apudthamalandtrust.com.au

Correspondence to Secretariat Officer: jessica.namai@apudthamalandtrust.com.au

Or by mail to: Apudthama Land Trust c/- Injinoo Aboriginal Community via Bamaga 4876 Qld.

such as CYLC and Balkanu involved in the assessment process but they and your department need to work with all of our communities in an open and transparent way rather than limit the opportunity for inclusiveness.

Both State and Commonwealth government representatives have repeatedly assured us that they would be pursuing a cultural landscape nomination and that any nomination is dependent on Traditional Owner consent. We now understand that the government intends to nominate areas of Cape York Peninsula to the World Heritage list in stages and that a Stage 1 nomination is likely to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee in February 2013.

We do not support the government's proposal of a staged approach which appears to be entirely due to issues unrelated to the recognition of the outstanding universal values of the area. We strongly urge you to lay aside political agendas and allow the time for Traditional Owners and the Cape York community generally to fully understand what a world heritage listing will mean for them and what benefits it will bring. Furthermore, we seek your assurance that if any nomination does proceed that it will go forward as a cultural landscape and that if for any reason the World Heritage Committee does not accept the cultural landscape listing then the nomination is withdrawn to ensure that your commitment to Aboriginal people is honoured.

Assuming that we are given the time to ensure that our community has enough information to make an informed decision we look forward to working with the Australian Government in having the cultural and natural heritage of Cape York internationally recognised.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reginald Williams', with a small flourish at the end.

Reginald Williams
Chair
0427693251