



NETWORK MESSAGE

Omnibus Bill 2010 introduced into NSW Parliament

The NSW Government introduced into Parliament the *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2010* (also known as the Omnibus Bill) on 25 February 2010.

The Government has also tabled *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Regulation 2010* and the *Due Diligence Guidelines*.

NSWALC has serious concerns regarding the impact of these amendments. In particular, NSWALC is concerned that the Omnibus Bill 2010 will:

- Reduce existing rights for Aboriginal people to be consulted before a permit authorising damage or destruction to Aboriginal heritage is issued by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW);
- Reduce existing avenues of appeal by Aboriginal people against permits issued by DECCW;
- Mean that Aboriginal objects are taken to 'no longer exist' as a result of a permit being issued by the Director-General of DECCW. This is regardless of whether the object will be completely destroyed.

NSWALC is urgently seeking discussions with the NSW Government regarding the Bill and Regulations, and is calling on the NSW Government to delay further debate on the Bill until there has been an opportunity to consider its impact.

NSWALC is urgently reviewing the details of the Bill so that further advice can be provided to the LALC network.

NSWALC wishes to advise the network and the broader Aboriginal community that it has been, and continues to be, focused on advocating for the best interests of Aboriginal people, particularly in respect to this Bill.

NSWALC encourages all Aboriginal people to consider the implications of the Bill in respect to their local communities and to contact NSWALC to raise any concerns.

A copy of the Bill can be found on the NSWALC Website at <http://www.alc.org.au/issues/culture--heritage.aspx>, or as a link from the NSWALC home page under 'Issues' and 'Culture and Heritage'.

FURTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The NSW Government first announced that it was planning to make changes to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, through the Omnibus Bill, in April 2009. A Consultation Draft of the *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill 2009* was released by DECCW and public comments were invited.

In July 2009, NSWALC provided a detailed submission in response to the Omnibus Bill and other related documents, including the *Due Diligence Guidelines*. NSWALC's submission was entitled *More than Flora and Fauna*.

An initial review indicates that the Omnibus Bill has not adopted many of the key recommendations put forward by New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) in 2009. The Bill also appears to include major new Aboriginal heritage changes which were not included in the 2009 version of the Bill.

Copies of the *More than Flora and Fauna* submission, and the Fact Sheets developed by NSWALC to explain the changes that were proposed in 2009 (many of which are included in the 2010 Bill), are available from the NSWALC website at <http://www.alc.org.au/issues/culture--heritage.aspx>, or from the Home Page under 'Issues' and 'Culture and Heritage'.

More information

If you have any questions or wish to raise any concerns regarding the Bill, please contact Clare McHugh, A/Director of Policy and Research Unit on (02) 9689 4522 or clare.mchugh@alc.org.au

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