



The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for the Environment



MC14-004197

840/1307

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

20 FEB 2014

Dear Dr Jensen

I refer to your letter of 2 January 2014 with reference to a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding possible World Heritage Listing of the Dampier Archipelago.

The petition asks the House of Representatives to (i) pay heed to the final report of the Australian Heritage Council re the Burrup April 2012, and (ii) encourage the State of Western Australia to nominate the Burrup area for World Heritage listing.

As the petitioners observe, responsibility to prepare a World Heritage nomination of the Dampier Archipelago lies with the Western Australian Government.

The high national importance of the Dampier Archipelago (including the Burrup Peninsula) is recognised by its inclusion on the National Heritage List in 2007. The listed national heritage values of this place are protected as matters of national environmental significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

In May 2012 the Australian Heritage Council published its assessment that the Dampier Archipelago (including the Burrup Peninsula) place is likely to meet the threshold of Outstanding Universal Value against one or more World Heritage criteria. The Council considered that further information and research with traditional owners would be required to clarify the potential for the place to meet World Heritage criteria pertaining to living cultural tradition. The Council recommended that a study be undertaken to explore these values for possible addition to the current listed national heritage values and potentially also for consideration for a future World Heritage nomination. The timing of this study must accord with the priorities of the relevant Aboriginal community.

Effective management of the heritage place would be required before any World Heritage nomination could proceed. Officers from the Department of the Environment are continuing to work with the Aboriginal community, the Western Australian Government and industry parties to develop stronger management arrangements to protect and conserve the heritage values of the national heritage place. In addition, significant funds are allocated under Conservation Agreements with industry partners for projects to deliver net benefits to protect and conserve the national heritage values of the place.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

 Greg Hunt