



Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
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4 March 2019

Dear Senators

Re: Environment Legislation Amendment (Protecting Dugongs and Turtles) Bill 2019

The Cape York Land Council (CYLC) is the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for Cape York Peninsula land and seas. In our NTRB role we fulfil statutory functions under *the Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). In our broader Land Council role we support, protect and promote Cape York Aboriginal peoples' interests in land and sea to positively affect their social, economic, cultural and environmental circumstances. In this capacity CYLC provides the following submission in relation to the *Environment Legislation Amendment (Protecting Dugongs and Turtles) Bill 2019* (the Bill).

CYLC does not support the Bill on the grounds that insufficient awareness has been raised nor opportunity provided for Cape York Aboriginal people to consider and respond to the legislative amendments proposed by the Bill.

The Bill has significant relevance for Cape York's Aboriginal people because they are the traditional owners of approximately one third of the Great Barrier Reef and other sea country around Cape York and engage in the hunting of turtle and dugong as part of their traditional practice. As such Cape York's Aboriginal people will be one of the main groups affected by the proposed additional requirements of a traditional use of marine resource agreements (TUMRAs).

However, despite being a major stakeholder affected by the Bill's proposed amendments, we are not aware of any informed consultation with Cape York Aboriginal people about the Bill to discuss how it affects them or the practicality of implementing the proposed amendments. Instead, a mere nineteen days has been allowed for people to make comment to a Senate inquiry, and no attempt has been made to raise awareness of the submission process. Without meaningful engagement of major stakeholders in this process it will be impossible to achieve its objectives.

The Bill should be withdrawn pending meaningful consultation with Cape York Aboriginal people affected by the Bill's proposed amendments.

Yours sincerely,

Richie Ah Mat
Chair
Cape York Land Council