



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

**Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM
Secretary**

Ref: EC17-000615

Ms Christine McDonald
Secretary Environment and Communications References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms McDonald

I refer to your letter of 15 June 2017 concerning a supplementary submission from Dr Ken Mulvaney to the Senate inquiry into the protection of Aboriginal rock art of the Burrup Peninsula. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to respond.

Under conditions 8(d)(i) and 10(c)(i) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* approval for the technical ammonium nitrate production facility (EPBC 2008/4546), a heritage monitor or other suitably qualified person is required to survey Aboriginal rock art sites at least annually, and provide a report following each survey being completed.

The prerequisite for the suitably qualified person is an honours degree in archaeology or five years' experience in Indigenous heritage or archaeology recognised by a relevant body such as the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists.

Since 2004, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation has conducted heritage monitoring of the Aboriginal rock art. Prior to the senate inquiry, the CSIRO issued a public statement supporting the integrity of its research and researchers. This has been reiterated to the Department of the Environment and Energy by the CSIRO in subsequent correspondence.

The Department is satisfied that the CSIRO has the necessary skills, experience and qualifications to fulfil the role of heritage monitor, consistent with the conditions of EPBC Act approval 2008/4546. The role of the Department is to ensure compliance with the conditions of the approval and Departmental staff have correctly applied national environmental law in order to protect the values of the Dampier Archipelago (including the Burrup Peninsula) National Heritage Place.

The Department encourages anybody with information of a potential breach of an EPBC Act approval condition to contact the Compliance Monitoring Team by emailing epbcmonitoring@environment.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Gordon de Brouwer
29 June 2017