

MAAIANGAL ABORIGINAL HERITAGE INC.
TRADITIONAL WORIMI CUSTODIANS

29 DONALD STREET
NELSON BAY NSW 2315
PH: (02) 49 843 113

STOCKTON BIGHT - PORT STEPHENS

We the Maaiangal Ngura (Clan) of the Worimi Nation, thoroughly condemn the decision by the NSW Carr Government to create a new National Park covering Stockton Bight, Port Stephens, to grant licence for sand mining of such and to grant further land to the Worimi Local Aboriginal Lands Council. The land in question is currently subject to a registered Native Title Claim by the Maaiangal people lodged on the 03 August, 2000 and accepted and registered by the Native Title Tribunal (NSW) on 01 September, 2000.

We find the actions of the NSW Carr Government, Mineral Deposits Mining Company, the NSW Aboriginal Lands Council, the Worimi Local Aboriginal Lands Council, the Port Stephens Council and the Native Title Unit of NSW to be naive in terms of protecting Traditional Aboriginal culture and heritage and irresponsible in terms of protecting the environment. The decision to extend mining on the bight and the resulting pollution will impact enormously on the bio-diversity, water, land and marine food resources.

We ask, where is the commitment to Traditional Aboriginal Owners, our culture and heritage or reconciliation? It appears that the NSW Government approach is consistent with colonial policies, ensuring the dispossession of Traditional Aboriginal Owners land a second time. It is very evident that the NSW Aboriginal Land Council bureaucracy has failed to represent and support Traditional Owners, and in doing so appear to have adopted a Protection Board style dominated by greed and carelessness. The Governments own Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has investigated the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and Local Aboriginal Land Council's and found evidence of substantial corruption. And yet the NSW Government, with this decision, after extensive consultation with the NSW Aboriginal Lands Council, Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council and Mineral Deposits Company believe it has settled an issue that satisfies all major parties. All major parties except the Traditional Owners, the general public, small businesses that utilise the bight and four wheel drive clubs etc..

I call on all Traditional people who still live in their own traditional lands to form an alliance, to provide support to one another, to nurture our culture and to deliver justice. We the Maaiangal Ngura (Clan) of the Worimi Nation, also seek explanation and action on this reckless decision from the Commonwealth and State Ministers and Governments responsible for Aboriginal issues, Native Title and the environment.

Carol Ridgeway-Bissett

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Traditional Worimi Custodian

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