



# **Robyn Parker MP**

## **Minister for the Environment**

## **Minister for Heritage**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **BETTER PROTECTION FOR ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Historic reforms to modernise Aboriginal cultural heritage laws were announced today by Environment and Heritage Minister Robyn Parker and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Victor Dominello.

Ms Parker said for the first time Aboriginal cultural heritage will have standalone legislation recognising its unique and important value.

“Currently Aboriginal cultural heritage protections are regulated by the National Parks and Wildlife Act along with native flora and fauna – which is clearly not appropriate,” Ms Parker said.

“A variety of options are proposed regarding how the local Aboriginal community makes decisions about protection of their cultural heritage.

“Also, these proposed reforms will ensure cultural heritage considerations will occur at the start of any development process, giving greater certainty to both Aboriginal communities and project developers, and also generating time and cost savings.

“These proposed reforms build on our work to protect special Aboriginal places. I’m delighted that since coming to Government we have declared 25 Aboriginal Places, protecting and acknowledging these important sites.”

Mr Dominello said the consultation undertaken to-date had revealed an overwhelming call for reform across the community – from Aboriginal groups and organisations, farmers and miners, land developers and local governments, rural and urban communities.

“While there are many views about what kind of changes need to be made to deliver better outcomes, everyone is agreed on one issue – the time has come for us to reform Aboriginal Cultural Heritage legislation in NSW,” Mr Dominello said.

“A new standalone piece of legislation dedicated to protection of Aboriginal culture and heritage is long overdue.

“We now need to hear from you and look forward to constructive feedback on the Government’s response in order to create the best possible model for all stakeholders.”

The Government’s proposed reform model has been informed by consultation and consideration of the recommendations from the independent, expert Aboriginal culture and heritage reform working group.

Further information on the reform process is available at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/achreform](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/achreform).