

Maralinga Lands Unnamed Conservation Park Co-management Board

Mr John Mungee, Presiding Member

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Response due	

7 August 2014

Ian Hunter MLC
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation
Level 9, Chesser House
91-97 Grenfell St
Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Minister

RE: Review of State Government Boards and Committees

Thank you for your letter updating the Maralinga Lands Unnamed Conservation Park Co-Management Board (the Board), regarding the review of State Government Boards and Committees.

I recently met with the Regional Manager of Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara to discuss the review, and on behalf of the Board I ask you to support retaining the Board.

Mamungari Conservation Park is culturally very special country for Anangu. As you know, the Board is made up of Traditional Owners and community members from Maralinga Tjarutja and Pila Nguru (Western Australia), as both communities are connected to the Park. We want to continue to independently own and manage the park for the future of the country, for the future of Anangu, for Tjukurpa, and for traditional hunting and gathering.

We believe the management of Mamungari through the Board represents an important part of the government's commitment to reconciliation and we are proud to be in partnership with the government, working "tjunga", together, in making decisions about the management of our country. This provides us with recognition and status as land owners, land managers and decision makers, similar to bodies such as APY and Yalata.

Removing the Board would mean this recognition and independence is taken away and would be a backward step in our relationship with the government. Who would make decisions for the park? This would be difficult as both Maralinga Tjarutja, and Pila Nguru in Western Australia, both have special connection to this country.

Furthermore, most of our members live in very remote communities and have limited access to technology. This means that the best way for us to talk to government on behalf of our communities is through direct, face-to-face communication and to build strong personal relationships. I would much rather make decisions regarding the management of the park directly with your staff so I can be sure they are listening to our independent views.

The Board also believes it is providing additional value to the government in the following ways:

- Contributing to Aboriginal employment by jointly deciding to devolve aspects of park management and executive officer duties to Maralinga Tjarutja and Pila Nguru.
- Through reconnecting with country through land management work and return to country trips (e.g. a women's trip in 2012 and a men's trip in 2014), the Board is keeping Tjukurpa, Aboriginal culture, alive and strong.
- Providing another strong link to government and consistent NRM approaches across the region by forming a strong relationship with the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board.
- Committing to undertaking development training, so that we can assist in producing future Aboriginal leaders for Maralinga Tjarutja and Pila Nguru.

As previously outlined, I feel strongly that the Board gives us due recognition as independent land owners, managers and good decision makers. If the Board were abolished, there may be a number of risks to both the government and to the affected communities. These include:

- Deterioration in our relationship with government and a view that the government does not support self-determination of our country.
- There may be arguments between Maralinga Tjarutja and Pila Nguru in regards to how best to manage and make decisions for the Park. The Board currently provides an excellent forum to discuss and decide on these matters.
- Without the support of the Board and good relationships with our partners in the government and the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board, there is the risk that the park would not be well managed, leaving it open to misuse such as illegally poaching our bush tucker.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support for the Board and management of the park. We are committed to continuously improving our performance and the model we are currently working on in partnership with Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara is a good one.

We are looking forward to an on-park meeting in September of this year which will be followed up with an important men's trip to country. I would like to extend an invitation to both yourself and the Premier, to a Board meeting and to visit our special country. This will assist us to discuss the running of the Board and the park.

If you would like to discuss further, or you would like more information in order to provide support for the board, please contact me as soon as possible. At this point in time this is best done through the Regional Manager of Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara, Matthew Ward (matthew.ward@sa.gov.au, 0428 116 023).

Yours sincerely,



Mr John Mungee
Presiding Member
Maralinga Lands Unnamed Conservation Park Co-management Board

Sue Agars, Executive Officer, MLUCP Co-management Board, Tel: 8463 4843