



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HERITAGE COUNCIL

31 July 2024

STATEMENT FROM THE VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HERITAGE COUNCIL

Council continues to advocate for improvements to Victoria's cultural heritage system. However, the Opposition's suggestion that this system is the key culprit in the current housing shortfall is both misguided and unhelpful.

Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) apply to only a fraction of new housing developments in Victoria. For the fraction of developments requiring CHMPs, this approval process is one among many that is needed to develop land in Victoria. Unlike other planning approvals, our cultural heritage system enshrines fundamental human rights. Namely, the rights of Victorian Traditional Owners to protect their Cultural Heritage.

Council rejects any reforms to the cultural heritage system that have the effect of limiting Traditional Owner rights in Country.

Council's door is open for having these critical conversations before system reform progresses. Council is also open to facilitating constructive dialogue between key players in the system.

As the independent voice of Traditional Owners, Council was not consulted prior to recent statements proposing major changes to the cultural heritage system. Council will be seeking a meeting with the Opposition Leader, Mr Pesutto, to discuss potential system reform.

Victorian Traditional Owners should take strength from the knowledge that our Peoples have, and continue to, overcome threats to the systems that recognise and uphold our rights. First Peoples are resilient and we will continue to fight for our rights.