

HON. ROBIN CHAPPLE MLC

Mining companies must abandon their plans to blow up First Nations Heritage and Culture

The Greens are calling on mining companies that have any approvals to destroy First Nations cultural and heritage sites to abandon them.

"It is beyond belief that BHP got permission to destroy at least 40 – and possibly as many as 86 – significant Aboriginal sites in the central Pilbara to expand BHP's South Flank iron ore just days after international outcry over Rio Tinto's destruction of Juukan Gorge. BHP needs to step back abandon this proposal and work with the Banjima peoples to protect these irreplaceable areas," Australian Greens spokesperson on First Nations issues Senator Rachel Siewert said.

"This wanton destruction of First Nations heritage cannot go on.

"To be clear BHP do not have the social licence to destroy these sites.

"Governments should not be using outdated laws to assist the mining industry to destroy irreplaceable First Nations peoples heritage under the cover of laws and agreements that mean the Traditional Owners cannot even appeal or speak out against.

"If the mining companies won't abandon these proposals the WA Government and Federal governments must act under the admittedly weak laws. This example highlights even more the urgent need to update our laws.

"The era of the mining industry's access to any land they want has to end. They do not have the social licence and the world is watching."

"It is ludicrous of the State Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to give permission on 29 May for BHP to destroy cultural sites across this region and more specifically the Djadjiling Range registered site 25664 and then appeal to BHP not to destroy that site that he had just given them permission to destroy,"
Robin Chapple MLC Greens WA spokesperson on Aboriginal affairs.

"The process of tying the hands of Aboriginal corporations by way of contractual agreements that they are not allowed to voice opposition to mining developments on their lands by the mining corporations has to stop"

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