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MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

Heritage move a damaging step for Broome

A move by the WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs to register all of Broome as an Aboriginal site will impact the town's residents and businesses, according to Broome Shire President, Ron Johnston.

"Broome does not need another costly layer of red tape," Cr Johnston said.

"There is no public benefit to this registration, there is only cost, delay and uncertainty for people going about their ordinary business."

The DAA has been working on the application for 18 months but only recently notified the Shire of Broome. The deadline for public submissions on the proposal is Friday 25 November, with the Shire receiving an extension to 30 November.

The only notice the community has been given was a public notice advertisement in The West Australian newspaper on 5 November.

"The autocratic approach adopted by the DAA in managing this process is profoundly disappointing," Cr Johnston said.

"DAA's approach to procedural fairness for the approximately 7000 land owners fails the test of reasonableness and is inconsistent with the policy it has employed to date."

Cr Johnston said that Aboriginal heritage and culture was an integral part of Broome and the Shire was working cooperatively with Yawuru Traditional Owners.

"However, the proposed site registration will be unnecessarily disruptive to the town and community and will not achieve any Aboriginal heritage protection outcomes," Cr Johnston said.

"Further, it will potentially impact the good relationship between the Shire, the Broome community and the Traditional Owners which the Shire is working hard to build."

Cr Johnston said he would meet with the Acting Director General of DAA on 28 November with Yawuru and he expected agreement that consideration of DAA's application by the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee should be deferred until there was proper engagement in Broome with the Shire, Yawuru and Goolarabooloo.

More information is available on the Shire of Broome website at www.broome.wa.gov.au.

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