**The Statement**

Dear

We are writing on behalf of the Flinders University archaeology student body to express our deepest concerns regarding BHP Mining Corporation’s plans to destroy some 40 Aboriginal heritage sites on Banjima country, Western Australia. Additionally, we condemn Rio Tinto mining corporation’s recent destruction of Juukan Gorge and associated cultural heritage sites in the Pilbara Region. These sites remain of great significance to the Banjima, Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura peoples and have existed as aspects of a living landscape and culture for millennia.

Their destruction occurs during a time when protests across the globe for the erasure of racial prejudice are at the forefront of social concerns. This disregard for the importance of these sites to the Banjima community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia in pursuit of profit serves only to further promote ideologies which suggest the cultural heritage of indigenous Australians does not matter.

We appreciate the decision by BHP to suspend mining activity in the Pilbara region before further consultation with Banjima Traditional Owners and Custodians and hope this consultation will respect their wishes. We ask for your support in ensuring BHP work within the ethical guidelines set out by the International Council of Mining and Metals (ICMM) *Indigenous Peoples and Mining Good Practice Guide* and reverses its decision to destroy sites on Banjima Country.The ICMM outlines a framework within which mining companies should go ‘*beyond preservation by enhancing culture and increasing cultural importance’* (ICMM 2015:34); a guideline which we believe BHP is acting in direct violation of.

In solidarity with the Banjima, Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura peoples, we join calls by the Australian Indigenous Archaeologists Association (AIAA) for federally legislated minimum national standards for the protection and management of Indigenous cultural heritage and ask that we receive your support and action in this endeavour.

Sincerely,

The Flinders University Student Body.

**Policy Makers to email:**

* Hon. Mark McGowan, Premier of WA: mark.mcgowan@mp.wa.gov.au
* Hon. Ben Wyatt, WA Minister for Finance; Treasurer; Aboriginal Affairs and Lands: Minister.wyatt@dpc.wa.gov.au
* Hon. Scott Morrison, Prime Minister: <https://pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>
* Hon. Ken Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Australians: Ken.Wyatt.MP@aph.gov.au
* Hon. Linda Burney MP, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians: Linda.Burney.MP@aph.gov.au