Professor Carmen Lawrence

Development at any price? The case of Australia’s Indigenous Heritage

In assessing the state of protection of Indigenous heritage, the authors of the recent State of the Environment report concluded that individual decisions on assessment and development have resulted in the progressive, cumulative destruction of the Indigenous cultural resource. It is clear that Indigenous heritage is confronted by two main threats: the disruption of Aboriginal knowledge and culture; and the disturbance and destruction of sites due to urban expansion and resource extraction. Unless we re-weight the balance between economic activity and heritage and culture, priceless human assets will be lost forever and the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians will be compromised further.

Biography
After training as a research psychologist at the University of Western Australia and lecturing in a number of Australian universities, Dr Lawrence entered politics in 1986, serving at both State and Federal levels for 21 years. At various times she was WA Minister for Education and Aboriginal Affairs, and was the first woman Premier and Treasurer of a State government. She moved to Federal politics in 1994 when elected as Member for Fremantle. There she was appointed Minister for Health and Human Services, and Minister assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women. She held various portfolios while in Opposition, including Indigenous Affairs, Environment, Industry and Innovation, and was elected national President of the Labor Party in 2004. She retired from politics in 2007. Presently, Dr Lawrence is Director of the Centre for the Study of Social Change in the School of Psychology at the University of Western Australia and Chair of the Australian Heritage Council.

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Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre,
University of Tasmania, Newnham

All welcome, free admission
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