

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women



Friday, 19 June 2020

INTERIM PROTECTION ORDER FOR MOUNT ARAPILES SITE

An interim protection declaration has been made for an Aboriginal site in Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park in the state's north-west, following the discovery of culturally significant rock art.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams announced the declaration today, which will ensure the area is adequately protected while Traditional Owners and land managers consider longer-term protection strategies for the site.

Dyurrite 1 is a small rock shelter that is part of Taylors Rock or Declaration Crag, located to the south of Mount Arapiles, where more than 50 Aboriginal rock art motifs – undetectable to the naked eye – have recently been identified.

The site which is popular with rock climbers, also includes a stone artefact scatter and a stone quarry.

While the area was immediately closed to park users in December, the interim declaration allows for significant fines if the area is disturbed. It will be subject to review in three months' time and can be extended for a further three months.

The site has already been added to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.

The Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation represent Traditional Owners in this part of the state, including Arapiles, and will work in partnership with the Victorian Government on a long-term protection strategy.

The declaration is the first interim protection declaration made under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

Two permanent protection declarations were made for the Garradha Molwa in December 2011 and the Point Ritchie Moyjil Midden Complex in August 2013.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"We take the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage very seriously – and it is essential we work together with the whole community to protect, celebrate and respect Aboriginal history."

"This declaration gives Traditional Owners time to consider what safeguards they would like in place in the long term to preserve the cultural significance of Dyurrite 1."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"Maintaining and protecting Aboriginal culture is a joint responsibility – this decision will give tourists and park users certainty and confidence, so they are free to enjoy these landscapes without fear of causing harm to irreplaceable Aboriginal heritage."