



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

NT Government needs to grow up

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In his rush to try and score a cheap political point, Chief Minister Denis Burke has exposed his own ignorance both of Aboriginal culture and of its central role in the NT's tourism industry.

"By making this a political issue, Mr Burke has shown total disrespect for the man who died," NLC Chairman Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu said.

"He has shown total disregard for a living Indigenous culture, and for the Indigenous people who comprise 30% of his constituency."

"Mr Burke is also showing total disdain for the intelligence and sensitivity of tourists and tour operators in the area."

"The NT Government needs to grow up," he said. "It is not just trying to kill off a living culture – it is in danger of killing off tourism in the Northern Territory, by reducing the Uluru experience to a mere climb up a piece of rock."

"Mr Burke's aggressive response is like trampling on the very living culture that brings thousands of people from all over the world to the Northern Territory."

"His extreme reaction is in contrast to the moderate response of both the Federal Government and the tourism industry, who clearly have a better understanding of Aboriginal culture and the tourist potential of this event."

Mr Yunupingu said: "Tourists to Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park in Central Australia at the moment actually have a unique opportunity to witness real, living culture during the closure of the climb."

"The closure is an important part of the culture, a unique part of the experience."

"They can go back home and say they were there at Uluru at a very important time in its history."

"For many, I am sure, that is more significant than climbing the rock."

"People might like to ask why Denis Burke has reacted the way he has, why he seems so blinkered," Mr Yunupingu said.

"The Federal Government is not reacting in this confrontational way, tour operators are responding in a moderate way. Why is Denis Burke showing such animosity towards Indigenous people?"