Celebrating and Safeguarding Our Rich History

Heritage Minister Karl Hampton will today introduce into Parliament a Bill to amend the Territory’s Heritage Conservation Act.

Mr Hampton said the new Heritage Act follows a review into the existing legislation that highlights several shortcomings that will be addressed by the new legislation.

“The existing legislation is 20 years old and public consultation has identified areas in need of improvement to better protect the Territory’s rare and cherished heritage,” Mr Hampton said.

“Public consultation included the release of the draft Bill last year for public comment with forums held in Darwin and Alice Springs.

“I believe this legislation represents a real step forward in terms of improving the framework within which the Territory Government, working with the community, manages the unique and diverse heritage of the Territory.

“This is further evidence of this Government's commitment to promoting the Great Territory Lifestyle by safeguarding our history.”

The key features of the Bill are:

- A new process for heritage listing which introduces timelines at all stages of the listing process and allows for interim protection of places assessed as being worthy of heritage listing;
- Improved processes for carrying out work, including the ability for the Heritage Council to make decisions about minor work;
- An expanded Heritage Council, which includes representation from local government and property owners, and which requires the Minister, as far as practicable, to ensure Aboriginal representation;
- The capacity to list classes of places, thus extending the protection of places that are considered to be important aspects of our heritage but are difficult to list individually;
- Increased penalties and improved provision for on-the-ground enforcement; and
- Expanded rights of review.

The new Heritage Act is expected to be debated and passed in the October sittings of Parliament.

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