MINISTER FOR LANDS, PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

BILL TO SET UP NEW ENVIRONMENTAL WATCHDOG INTRODUCED

October 25th, 2012

Chief Minister Terry Mills has today moved closer to delivering on his election promise to establish an independent Environmental watch dog.

The Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Bill was introduced during Parliament today.

"The new NT EPA will have real powers to ensure future development in the Territory is undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner," Mr Mills said.

"It will consist of a chair and four members and will repeal the existing Environment Protection Authority Act, which had limited enforcement and legislative powers.

"The new NT EPA will work with industry, relevant Government agencies and the public to develop environmental guidelines while setting rigorous standards in environmental management.

"It will have independent legal status and will be able to:
- Undertake environmental assessments and make recommendations
- Provide advice to the Minister
- Undertake functions associated with the management of waste and pollution, including compliance and enforcement.

"The new NT EPA will not be subject to Ministerial direction.

"The Bill also ensures Ministers are held accountable with a new function that allows any decisions not to adopt the NT EPA’s advice or recommendations to be made public."

Mr Mills said he was delighted that Dr William Freeland has accepted to be the Government’s nominee for the role of chair of the new NT EPA.

"Dr Freeland’s skills, knowledge and experience make him eminently suitable,” he said.

"He brings a wealth of experience to the NT EPA, having worked in senior positions with the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission and as a senior environmental consultant.

"Dr Freeland will be an excellent chairperson of the new NT EPA and I look forward to working with him in the future.”

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