Building a better skyline for Darwin

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Buildings more than 90m in height can now be considered for Darwin’s CBD – but only with the consent of the Department of Defence and civil aviation authorities.

Minister for Lands and Planning David Tollner has today amended the NT Planning Scheme by removing the blanket 90m limit on building heights in the Darwin city centre.

However, the 55m height restriction on future development along The Esplanade and the 90m height restriction on future development along the south-western side of Mitchell Street will both be retained.

Darwin Waterfront precinct is outside the CBD and will not be affected by the amendment.

“We don’t want to see tall buildings lining the Esplanade and destroying the spectacular views of Darwin Harbour from other buildings in the CBD,” Mr Tollner said.

“But elsewhere there are good reasons for allowing developers to consider building higher than the arbitrary 90m limit.

“High-rise buildings are now a common feature of the CBD and this decision will help ease the demand for development elsewhere in Darwin.

“If we are to make the CBD a more vibrant place, encouraging more people to live and work there obviously makes sense.

“And if architects are given approval to design above 90m it will give them the flexibility to create more imaginative buildings and a more attractive skyline.

“Most Australian capital cities have buildings over 200m, but Darwin’s civilian and military aviation restrictions mean we’re unlikely to see many buildings above half that height.”

Applicants must seek consent from the Department of Defence for all buildings over 90m.

They must also seek approval from Darwin International Airport and the Federal Government’s Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.
If these consents are obtained, potential developers will still need to seek approval through the NT’s planning system for all other aspects of a development.

Former Lands and Planning Minister Peter Chandler exhibited the proposed amendment on September 15 2014 for 28 days and a public hearing was held on November 21.

Thirteen submissions were made, including five objections.