The NT Government is acting immediately to give legal protection to the “Darwin Princess” by subjecting the shipwreck site to an Interim Conservation Order.

Environment and Heritage Minister Marion Scrymgour will sign an instrument declaring the site in the Darwin Harbour to the ICO, which will provide protection to the site for 90 days, as a matter of urgency.

The Darwin Princess is the last vessel to be recorded missing in the Darwin Harbour during Cyclone Tracy.

“This is an important and historic discovery which will close the final chapter in the loss of ships in the Darwin Harbour following Cyclone Tracy,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“I have acted immediately to ensure an ICO is issued to protect the site while the NT Police conduct an investigation to positively identify the wreck and recover any human remains that may exist on the vessel.”

The ICO under the Heritage Conservation Act ensures severe penalties for anyone found to have interfered with the site.

Ms Scrymgour said consideration will be given to the long-term management strategies over the site.