Minister for Environment and Heritage, Dr Chris Burns, today launched a public discussion paper that canvasses possible options for an updated and amended Heritage Conservation Act for the Northern Territory.

"This discussion paper introduces a review of the Northern Territory Heritage Conservation Act 1991, and canvasses a range of issues and legislative options – each of which needs to be considered in the development of a new framework for heritage conservation in the Territory," Dr Burns said.

Dr Burns said that he was committed to ensuring that the Territory has the best framework possible for protecting heritage sites and artefacts.

"The current review of the Heritage Conservation Act will look at heritage protection and conservation models from around Australia to see how these issues are dealt with elsewhere. This is an important opportunity for us to take the best that Australia has to offer and craft it into a tailor-made heritage conservation system for the Territory," Dr Burns said.

"Many diverse cultures participated in developing the Northern Territory, and have left behind them a rich record of places and artefacts that form the history of the Territory today.

"Our appreciation and respect for our heritage plays a central role in conserving the story of the lives and experiences of those who have helped build the Territory.

"Labor announced at the last election that it was committed to improving the processes that protect and conserve the Territory’s heritage, and this discussion paper begins to deliver on that promise, forming the centrepiece of an ongoing process of consultation with all Territorians over heritage issues, and seeks their views on heritage and what it means to them.

"I encourage all members of the community to read the discussion paper and to put forward their views on how the legislative regime can best help achieve our heritage goals.

"With an appropriate legislative framework; with highly motivated organisations and individuals; and with an absolute commitment to authenticity, we can secure the Territory’s heritage, preserving the past for the benefit of future generations," Dr Burns said.

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