WWII SHIPWRECK TO BE LISTED

A 125-year-old ship believed to have sunk in Darwin Harbour during Japanese air raids has been heritage listed, Environment and Heritage Minister Marion Scrymgour announced today.

*The Kelat*, which was built in 1881, is the only known coal hulk wreck in Darwin Harbour and is significant to the Territory for its association with the air raids on February 19, 1942.

“It is a tangible reminder of Australia’s military presence in the Northern Territory during World War II,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“It is an example of a 19th century iron hulled sailing ship which ended her days as a coal hulk.”

Ms Scrymgour said the vessel was brought to Darwin by the Royal Australian Navy for coal bunkering operations when coal fired ships were becoming redundant.

It is believed that the ship was struck by gun fire and sunk in Darwin Harbour over 60 years ago.

Ms Scrymgour said the NT Government was committed to protecting the Territory’s heritage, with major Heritage reforms announced prior to the election progressing well.

New laws were announced by Labor Government earlier this year, and will provide interim protection of sites once they are nominated and also remove the capacity of any government minister to destroy a declared heritage place – an amendment introduced by the former CLP Government.

Ms Scrymgour said one of the key features of the new legislation will be a new heritage council with a much broader representation from across the community, and expanded decision-making authority.

“Labor is balancing growth with lifestyle while protecting our environment,” Ms Scrymgour said

“Our heritage places are very important in shaping the Territory’s identity, but they also play a huge role in our tourism industry - which of course has flow-on economic benefits for the NT.”

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